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On the strength of nations.



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ON THE

STRENGTH OF NATIONS.

BY

ANDREW BISSET,

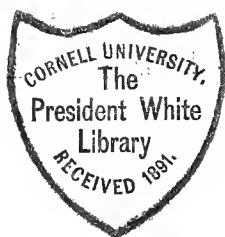
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P R E F A C E .

THE causes of the strength and weakness of a nation, so far as our own country is concerned, and in contradistinction to its wealth and commercial prosperity, have for some time occupied my thoughts; and I have employed much time in investigating minutely the records of one portion of the history of England, with a view of pointing out the evils in our systems of government and taxation, which appear to me to have sown the seeds of future disasters. But it is only lately that the critical aspect of affairs in Europe induced me to open up the subject of "The Strength of Nations," in order to recal to my contemporaries the lessons of the past as warnings, in the hope that they may be used to correct present evils, and avert possible and perhaps imminent dangers.

The Strength of Nations is a subject equally vast in its extent and in its importance; involving as it

does an elucidation of the causes of the decline and fall of the great empires of antiquity, and the diminution or decay of some kingdoms and states of modern times; and to do full justice to so comprehensive a theme, would require more time and space than are available to a writer having in view the application to the present crisis of principles and examples deduced from the facts of universal history.

This will account for, and I hope excuse, the limitation of the scope of this volume, and also the stress that is laid upon physical force and armaments as elements of national strength. It will, however, be seen that I have by no means omitted from the argument those moral and intellectual forces, and that spirit of patriotism, which are to the material power of a nation what the soul is to the body.

Nations, like individuals, have their growing youth, their energetic manhood, their maturity and decline; and to what height of power and greatness they may rise, how early and rapid may be their descent from the culminating point of their strength and prosperity to decay and ruin, depends upon the sound-

ness and vigour of their constitution, the amount of moral and spiritual forces they have exerted, and the extent to which these powers have been kept in healthy exercise by good government.

The examples I have selected are those nations whose history is best known to us, and whose fate affords the most instructive instances of the operation of causes analogous to those which tend to weaken the strength of Britain.

If it be too late to retrace the steps which our rulers have at various times taken in deviation from the right course, there is yet time to remedy in part the consequences of such errors, and to make up for the shortcomings which have led this country to the verge of a precipice, while the nation has been lulled into a dream of false security. And when the people of England are thoroughly aroused from their apathy to a sense of impending danger and neglected duties, the resolute determination of Englishmen will be shown in energetic action combined with an expression of the popular will, which no government will dare openly to disregard.

At a future time, I may be able to treat more fully, if not exhaustively, of “The Strength of Nations;” in the meantime, I trust that the present volume may be found serviceable in directing public attention to a subject which I believe has not before been discussed in a separate treatise; and which is, at the present time, of paramount importance to the safety and welfare of the country.

August 25th, 1859.

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ON THE

STRENGTH OF NATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIMARY ELEMENT OF THE STRENGTH
OF NATIONS.

“WHEN a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

This is as true now as it was two thousand years ago, and it nearly concerns all independent nations to look well to their strength, and to take order that a stronger nation do not come upon them and overcome them, and take from them not only their armour, but all things that render life of value to them.

Since the publication, in 1776, of Adam Smith's immortal work on the "Wealth of Nations," the wealth of nations has, in this country at least, engaged so much attention, that but little has been left for another quality of nations—their Strength; without which their wealth, with all its advantages, may be of little use, since it may be destroyed at any time with fearful rapidity. There appears to be a time in the history of all powerful nations at which, while their wealth goes on increasing, their strength begins to decline, till—to use the words of Bacon*—it comes to "that, that not the hundredth poll will be fit for a helmet; and so there will be great population and little strength."

And it is also well to bear in mind another remark of Bacon in the same Essay: "Neither is money the sinews of war (as it is trivially said) where the sinews of men's arms in base and effeminate people are failing; for Solon said well to Cræsus (when in ostentation he showed him his gold): 'Sir, if any other comes that hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.'" As soon as this current has fairly set in, unless its course can be arrested—which is a difficult if not an impossible operation—the decay of that nation has commenced, and will continue, till the time arrives when its strength is inadequate for its defence, and its wealth becomes the prey of an invader.

* *Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates.*

Adam Smith appears to consider this question to be satisfactorily solved by "the irresistible superiority" which, he says, "a well-regulated standing army has over a militia." And he mentions, as the first great revolution in the affairs of mankind of which history has preserved any distinct account, the victory which the standing army of Philip of Macedon obtained over what he terms "the gallant and well-exercised militias of the principal republics of ancient Greece."* This statement contains several grave errors. It is true that Philip's army may be termed a standing army, and it is also true—though Adam Smith has omitted that essential element, and therein lies one principal fallacy of his argument—that it was a standing army formed of *good materials*; but it is not true that the troops of Greece which it defeated were at that time "gallant and well-exercised militias."

"Indeed," as Mr. Grote has well observed,† "the Spartan infantry, from their peculiar and systematic training, possessed, though not in the days of Philip of Macedon, the arrangements and aptitudes of a good standing army." And it is no small proof of the superiority of a well-regulated standing army formed of good materials, that every Greek who contrasted his own brave and patriotic but unsystematized militia with the symmetrical structure of the

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i.

† *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 606.

Lacedæmonian armed force, and the preparation of every Spartan for his duty by a painful discipline and laborious drilling, experienced a feeling of inferiority which made him willingly accept the headship of "these professional artists in the business of war," as they are often denominated by the Greek writers.*

But Adam Smith's words, "gallant and well-exercised militias," would lead to the inference that the armed forces of the several States of Greece were in as sound a condition at the time of the battle of Chæronea as at the times of the battles of Marathon, Thermopylæ, and Plataea. The fact was, however, very different. We have the best authority for the conclusion that, in the course of the century preceding the battle of Chæronea, the military excellence of the Lacedæmonian armed force had greatly declined, if it had not almost disappeared, and that Athens no longer possessed a "gallant and well-exercised militia." I will endeavour to explain the causes of this change in these two States respectively. Mr. Grote, indeed, seems to think that the subdivision of Greece into numerous independent States—a subdivision in great part arising from the mountainous nature of the country—proved finally the cause of her ruin,† and that, had the Amphictyonic

* Grote, vol. ii. pp. 608, 609. Plutarch. *Pelop.* c. 23: Πάντων ἄκροι τεχνῖται καὶ σοφισταὶ τῶν πολεμικῶν ὄντες οἱ Σπαρτιᾶται. Xenoph. "Rep. Lac." c. 14. Λακεδαιμονίους δὲ μόνους τῷ ὄντι τεχνίτας τῶν πολεμικῶν.

† *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 299.

Council really been the “commune Græciæ concilium” which Cicero calls it, united Hellas might have maintained her independence not only against the Macedonian kings, but even against the conquering legions of Rome.* But the fact that Greece did maintain her independence against the great Persian invasion proves that her subdivision into numerous independent States was not the cause of her ultimate ruin. That cause must, I think, be looked for elsewhere. And in regard to the two principal States of Greece, Sparta and Athens, there exist sufficient data whereon to found a tolerably accurate conclusion. No union could ever have imparted a durable and healthy vitality to a nation with such a government as either the Spartan oligarchy or the Athenian democracy.

The question of standing armies and militias I shall hereafter consider more in detail. But Adam Smith, in the exaggerated importance he appears to me to have attached to standing armies generally, has, I think, taken an erroneous view of this question. At the same time the general opinion of the other States of Greece respecting the effect of the Spartan discipline seems to prove the advantage of superior discipline, whether the troops possessing that discipline are called a militia or a standing army. It is a remarkable fact that the militias of

* *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 332.

Epaminondas, Cromwell, and Washington beat the professional soldiers opposed to them.

The fundamental element of a nation's strength is the physical hardihood of its people, combined with that force and energy of character which are the consequences of such hardihood, and the patriotism, or love of and pride in country, which is the consequence of some degree of good government. Accordingly, all nations which have been at any time strong have encouraged the use of manly and athletic exercises; the neglect of which has a most pernicious effect, not only on the bodily strength, but on the bodily and mental health and courage of the community. For a coward—a man incapable of defending himself—as a celebrated writer * has observed, wants one of the most essential parts of the character of a man, being as much mutilated and deformed in his mind as a man who is deprived of some of his limbs, or has lost the use of them, is in his body. And to prevent that sort of mental mutilation, deformity, and wretchedness which cowardice necessarily involves in it, from spreading through the great body of the people, deserves the most serious attention of the government; in the same manner as it would deserve its most serious attention to prevent a deadly pestilential disease from spreading itself among them.

The great writer above referred to, however, does

* Adam Smith: *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i. part iii. art. ii.

not appear to estimate truly the danger of such a disease; when comparing it to a leprosy, he adds, "or any other loathsome and offensive disease, though neither mortal nor dangerous:" for the disease of cowardice, when it has to any extent attacked a nation, is not only dangerous but mortal.

Now, though it is true that the greatest courage and determination and force of character, as well as vigour of intellect, may co-exist with a feeble constitution and frame of body, yet, besides courage, bodily strength, hardihood, activity, power of endurance, and some skill in the use of arms, are essential for defence against an enemy; and these qualities can only be attained and preserved by some degree of bodily training and practice in the use of arms—a familiarity with which of itself imparts to men a certain amount of courage and self-reliance. Accordingly, all healthy and powerful nations have cultivated bodily strength and hardihood, from the early Persians to the English yeomen, whose strong right arms sent their deadly shafts among their enemies' ranks with such unerring aim and irresistible force. Of the careful training of the English archers, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

While the Persians were in their healthy and vigorous state, the three great lessons the youth were taught, from five to twenty years of age, were to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak truth.* But the

* Herod. i. 136.

Persians fell from the same cause which has destroyed so many nations—by the trunk of the tree becoming too weak to bear the branches: a process which commenced, in their case, from the time when Cyrus led the hardy mountaineers of Persia against the Medes.

In fact, this question can be more satisfactorily elucidated from the negative than the positive aspect of it; that is, from endeavouring to learn and to state accurately the principal causes which have led to the decline of the strength, and ultimately to the ruin, of nations. There are many symptoms by which the disease of the political body manifests itself; and the world is now old enough to supply an induction of facts recorded with sufficient accuracy to furnish some conclusions that may be of use to the present generation. In the following pages I will endeavour to show by such an induction, necessarily more or less imperfect, to what causes some of the most remarkable nations of the history of the world have been indebted, first, for their strength and prosperity, and afterwards for their weakness and ruin.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPARTANS.

THE Greeks, in their early and healthy state, paid the greatest possible attention to the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, by instituting public contests in running, leaping, wrestling, boxing, and throwing the quoit. And it is not unworthy of note that the prize was made of small value, that the combatants might be animated by the love of distinction, not of sordid gain. Of the Romans I shall speak in a subsequent chapter.

Among the Greeks, the Spartans, as I have said, were prominent for their cultivation of the physical and moral qualities (I mean those moral qualities that relate to courage, fortitude, and patriotism,) that go to the formation of a nation's strength. One grand peculiarity of Sparta consisted in having military divisions quite distinct from the civil divisions: a distinction which enabled the Spartans to render their military organization much more perfect than it ever was in the other States of Greece.* The special

* See the admirable account of the Spartan institutions, civil and military, in Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. ii. part ii. chapters vi. & viii.

characteristic of the Spartan system, and the pivot upon which all its arrangements turned, was what was called the enômoty. This was a small company of men, varying from twenty-five to thirty-six, drilled and practised together in military evolutions, and bound to each other by a common oath. Each enômoty had a separate captain, or enômotarch, the strongest and ablest soldier of the company, who always occupied the front rank, and led the enômoty when it marched in single file. In whatever number of ranks the enômoty was drawn up, the enômotarch usually occupied the front post on the left; in technical language, stood on the left flank of the front rank: and care was taken that both the front rank man and the rear rank man of each file * should be soldiers of particular merit. These small companies were taught to march in concert, to change rapidly from line to file, to wheel right or left, in such manner that the enômotarch and the other front rank men should always be the persons immediately opposed to the enemy. Their step was regulated by the fife, which played in martial measures peculiar to Sparta, and was employed in actual battle as well as in military practice. So perfect was their discipline,

* To render this clear, it is proper to state that the number of ranks; and the consequent number of men in a file, was more than two. Montecuculi gives the following clear definition of rank and file:—" *Rang* est un nombre de soldats rangés en ligne droite à côté l'un de l'autre. *File* est un nombre de soldats rangés en ligne droite l'un derrière l'autre."—*Mémoires de Montecuculi*, p. 5. Paris, 1760.

that if their order was deranged by any adverse accident, scattered soldiers could spontaneously form themselves into the same order, and each man knew perfectly the duties belonging to the place into which chance had thrown him. Above the enômoty there were larger divisions, somewhat corresponding to the modern battalion, or regiment, and brigade, each having its respective commander. Orders were transmitted from the king, as commander-in-chief, to these officers, each of whom was responsible for the proper execution of them by his division; whereas in the Athenian armies the orders of the commander-in-chief were proclaimed to the army by a herald—a very rude and imperfect contrivance.

One element of the Spartan patriotism appears to be assignable to the greater liberty and respect enjoyed by the women of Sparta than by those of the other States of Greece; the patriotism of the men being elevated by the sympathy of the other sex, which manifested itself publicly, in such a manner as not only to confirm the self-devotion of the soldiers, but materially to assist the State in bearing up against public reverses. The Spartan matrons' exhortation to their sons when departing on foreign service, "Return either with your shield, or upon it," was no unmeaning form of words; and one of the most striking incidents in Grecian history is the contrast between the bitter suffering of those mothers who, after the fatal day of Leuctra,

had to welcome home their surviving sons in dishonour and defeat, and the comparative cheerfulness of those whose sons had perished. The same spirit which animated the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ, and which dictated the inscription on their monument, "O stranger! tell the Lacedæmonians that we lie here obedient to their laws,"* also dictated the letter of Brasidas to the Ephori, containing only the words, "I will execute your orders in this war, or die:"† as well as the answer of the mother of Brasidas to the ambassadors from the Grecians in Thrace, who said that Brasidas had not left his equal behind him: "You mistake. My son was a man of great merit, but there are many superior to him in Sparta."‡

Now if we examine the condition of Sparta about 200 years later, that is, in the time of Agis III. (about 250 B.C.), we find the old discipline and military training altogether gone, or degenerated into mere forms, and the dignity and ascendancy of the State among its neighbours completely ruined. Together with this result, we find its citizens few in number, the bulk of them miserably poor, all the land in a small number of hands, and a numerous body of strangers or non-citizens domiciled in the town, and forming a powerful moneyed interest. What were the causes of this fatal change?

* Pausan. iii. 226. Strab. ix. 429.

† Plut. *Lac. Apophthegm.*

‡ Diod. xii. 72.

Lord Bacon seems to intimate an opinion (*Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*) that the aversion of the Spartans to the admission of strangers to the right of citizenship is sufficient of itself to account for the decline and fall of Sparta. It certainly may in part account for Sparta's not becoming, like Rome, a great empire. But the fact that the feeling of the Romans on this point (of whom Bacon truly says that never any State was so open to receive strangers into their body as were the Romans) did not preserve them at last from the same fate which had befallen Sparta, seems to prove that we must look for other causes than this.

Mr. Grote, who has examined and weighed all the evidence bearing on this subject with singular care and ability, has come to the conclusion that, though Greek theorists found a difficulty in determining under what class they should place the Spartan government, it was in substance a close, unscrupulous, and well-obeyed oligarchy; including within it, as subordinate, those portions which had once been dominant—the kings and the senate,—and softening the odium, without abating the mischief, of the system, by its annual change of the ruling ephors.* It followed, as one of the consequences of such an oligarchy, that the number of qualified citizens went on continually diminishing; and of this diminished number, the proportion of those who were needy grew

* Grote: *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 476.

larger and larger, since the landed property tended constantly to concentrate itself in fewer hands. To these principal causes of decay were added subsidiary ones.

I have said that the Spartan system of training cultivated, with the physical qualities of bodily strength, activity, and hardihood, or endurance, the moral qualities of fortitude and patriotism. But the system did not cultivate, in the least degree, the moral qualities of justice and humanity. On the contrary, in their aggressions on other States, and in their treatment of the races which they had subjected, they practised combinations of injustice, fraud, and atrocity, which, as Mr. Grote has observed, "even yet stand without parallel in the long list of precautions for fortifying unjust dominion."* And this indicates another leading defect in the Spartan institutions, which was the opposite extreme to the leading defect of the Athenian government. As the ruin of the Athenian government arose, as we shall see, from an excess of talk in the shape of long harangues, instead of dialectical discussion, one great evil in the Spartan government arose from an absence of all public discussion whatever : for the Spartan character was of an eminently un-intellectual type ; destitute even of the rudiments of letters, rendered savage and fierce by exclusive and overdone bodily discipline, and, if possessing many of

* Grote, vol. ii. p. 497.

the qualities requisite to procure dominion, possessing none of those calculated to render dominion popular or salutary to the subject. This intellectual defect of the Spartan character becomes more striking, when we find that it rendered all their excellent bodily training unavailing against inferior bodily training, where the inferiority was compensated by the leadership of a great and commanding mind. For the bodily training at Sparta combined strength and agility with universal aptitude and endurance, and steered clear of that mistake by which Thebes and other cities impaired the effect of their gymnastics—the attempt to create an athletic habit suited for the games, but suited for nothing else.* Yet Thebes, by the aid of one great mind leading her councils and commanding her armies, gave Sparta an overthrow from which she never recovered,—from which, indeed, the weak part of her system, particularly the accumulation of the land in very few hands, rendered it impossible for her to recover.

In a society so eminently unintellectual as that of Sparta, it may be pronounced impossible for a first-rate general to be produced. It may be true that great generals are born, not made: but their genius requires an atmosphere somewhat intellectual for its

* Cornelius Nepos, however, or the writer under that name ("Epam." c. 2), distinctly states that Epaminondas, in his own physical education, took especial care to avoid this error: "*Non tam magnitudini virium servivit, quam velocitati; illam enim ad athletarum usum, hanc ad belli existimabat utilitatem pertinere.*"

development; and we hear nothing of great generals (if such there are) born among savages. The Spartan training did, indeed, include the cunning as well as the hardihood and ferocity of the savage. But the strategy of a great general must soar somewhat beyond the cunning of an ordinary savage, or even of a Spartan. Indeed, two of the greatest generals the world has yet seen, the one in ancient, the other in modern times, were philosophers as well as generals and statesmen. The first gained the battle of Leuctra, the second the battle of Leuthen, both acting on the same strategical principle.

The principle upon which Epaminondas acted at Leuctra and Mantinea, and Frederick at Rosbach and Leuthen, consisted in bringing a superiority of numbers to bear upon a particular point, and by defeating that part, and driving it in upon the rest, throwing into confusion and defeating the whole. The way in which Epaminondas explained this principle to the Thebans, who stood somewhat in awe of the acknowledged military superiority of the Spartans, was this: having taken an adder of the largest size, he showed it to them; and then, in their presence having shattered the head of the animal, he said, "You see that the rest of the body is useless, the head being gone. So is it with the head of our enemies; if we break to pieces the Spartan part, the rest of the body, consisting of their allies, will be

useless.”* Now as it appears that the Spartan commanders always drew up their line of battle so that the Spartans formed one wing of themselves,† the principle of Epaminondas was the same as that of Frederick.

This was the principle on which Frederick acted always. Thus, Mitchell, the English ambassador, speaking from his own personal observation and the king's own words, says of the battle of Kolin, which Frederick lost by the failure of his intention: “His intention was to have flanked their right;” and of the battle of Zorndorff: “The king's intention was to attack with his left the right of the enemy in flank, and to refuse his right.”

* Polyæn. ii. 3 : Επαμινώνδας προτρέπων Θηβαίους προθύμως ὁρμήσαι ἐπὶ Λακεδαιμονίους, μέγιστον ἔχιν συλλαβὼν, ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ πάντων ἐναντίον τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ θηρίου συντρίψας. “Ὁρᾶτε,” ἔφη, “ὅτι τὸ λοιπὸν σῶμα ἄχρηστον, τῆς κεφαλῆς οἰχομένης· οὕτω δὴ αἱ τῶν πολεμίων κεφαλαί· ἦντε τὸ Λακωνικὸν τοῦτο συντρίψωμεν, τὸ λοιπὸν σῶμα τῶν συμμάχων ἄχρηστον.”

† Thucyd. v. 71. On the other hand the Roman legions occupied the centre (*mediam aciem tenebant*), the allies and auxiliaries the wings (*cornua*).—Liv. xxxvii. 39. This arrangement, however, was not always observed. At the battle of Marathon, the native Persians and Sakæ, the best troops in the whole army, were placed in the centre, which they considered as the post of honour, and which was occupied by the Persian king himself when present at a battle. The right wing was so regarded by the Greeks. In the order of battle of the Turks, adopted and constantly followed ever since the victorious battle of Ikonium in 1386, the European troops occupy the left wing, the Asiatic troops the right wing, the Janissaries the centre. The Sultan, or the Grand Vizir, surrounded by the national cavalry, or Spahis, is in the central point of all.—Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. iv. p. 468. Von Hammer: *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reichs*, bk. v. vol. i. p. 199.

It will be at once seen that the consequence of this movement is to bring a superiority of force to bear upon the enemy at a particular point: a principle which, though it may appear, as thus stated, extremely simple, is attended with so many difficulties in practice, that it has been found to require military genius of the very highest order for its successful execution. Frederick has himself related the careful precautions which he took to surmount those difficulties at the battle of Leuthen, and to prevent the failure of his plan, which had taken place at the battles of Prague and Kolin. His plan was, as he has himself explained it, to bring his whole army (which did not amount to half that of the enemy in numbers) to bear upon the left flank of the imperialists, to make the greatest possible efforts with his right, and to refuse his left with so much precaution as to render impossible blunders like those which had been committed at the battle of Prague, and had caused the loss of that of Kolin. The first line received orders to advance *en échelon*, the battalions at fifty paces distance behind one another, so that, the line being in motion, the extremity of the right would be a thousand paces in advance of the extremity of the left; and this disposition rendered it impossible for the troops to engage the enemy without orders.*

Some notes, printed in the *Quarterly Review*, of a

* *Hist. de la Guerre de Sept Ans*, tome i. p. 232, *et seq.*

conversation with Sir Arthur Wellesley shortly before his departure for Spain, afford another illustration of the same principle. He is represented as saying that he was not so much disheartened as others by the apparent invincibility of the French armies under Napoleon. The French charged in column, and were successful because the troops opposed to them would not stand the charge; but he had confidence, he said, in the steadiness of the British troops; and if they stood firm, this would have the effect of giving them the advantage of superiority of numbers at that particular point, and also of a converging fire—a fire from the circumference to the centre; while the enemy could return only a fire from the centre to the circumference, which is feeble in comparison.

The measures adopted by Epaminondas after the battle of Leuctra proved him to be as great a statesman as he was a general. He founded the town of Messene, with a surrounding territory, as a refuge, in the form of an independent State, for the unfortunate Messenians, who had been so long exiles, or oppressed as the Helots of the Spartans, and thus effectually secured the former against the haughty and inhuman tyranny of the latter. This will appear but a just retribution. Yet, though Sparta's supremacy over the rest of Greece was thus destroyed, her independence would have continued as long as her military excellence continued.

But the same vices in her system, which had brought upon her the disastrous days of Leuctra and Mantinea, with all their fatal consequences, were sapping the strength of her government, and proved its ultimate destruction. With all their pretensions to religion, the Spartans neglected as much as the Romans (who in some points resembled them, though they were essentially different in others) the admonition of those suffering in Tartarus for injustice on earth: "*Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos.*" The Athenians neglected the same admonition as much as either; while what strength existed at one time in the Athenian system of government was utterly destroyed by the weakness of a democracy, as the strength of the Spartan government was destroyed by the weakness of an oligarchy. It is not in the nature of human affairs that weak governments should stand, even if they should be altogether exempt from the vices of injustice and oppression; but their destruction will be still more sure and speedy when, like the Spartan oligarchy and the Athenian democracy, they seek first to obtain and then to keep dominion over other States, by means which are utterly repugnant to the very first principles of justice and humanity.

According to the careful investigation of Mr. Grote, landed property was always unequally divided at Sparta, nor were there any laws which tended to equalize it. Mr. Grote also shows that

the idea of Lycurgus, as an equal partitioner of lands, was a dream of the century of Agis and Cleomenes. The mode in which Lycurgus succeeded in giving to Sparta the strength which it long possessed in an eminent degree, was this:—He created in the Spartan citizens “unrivalled habits of obedience, hardihood, self-denial, and military aptitude; complete subjection on the part of each individual to the local public opinion, and preference of death to the abandonment of Spartan maxims; intense ambition on the part of every one to distinguish himself within the prescribed sphere of duties, with little ambition for anything else.”* What Lycurgus did, was to impose a vigorous public discipline, with simple clothing and fare, incumbent alike upon the rich and the poor. This was his special gift to Greece, according to Thucydides,† and his great point of contact with democracy, according to Aristotle.‡ But he took no pains either to restrain the further enrichment of the rich, or to prevent the further impoverishment of the poor; and such neglect is one of the capital defects for which Aristotle censures him.§ The philosopher also particularly notices the tendency of property at Sparta (from causes which it is

* Grote: *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 519.

† Thucyd. i. 6.

‡ Aristot. *Polit.* iv. 7, 4, 5; viii. 1, 3.

§ Grote, vol. ii. p. 539.

unnecessary to specify here, but which will be found enumerated in Mr. Grote's *History of Greece*), to concentrate itself in fewer hands, unopposed by any legal hindrances. By whatever means the process was effected, we know that in the time of Agis III., about 250 years before Christ, when all the land of Sparta was in a very small number of hands, when the citizens were few in number, and the bulk of them miserably poor, the old discipline and the public mess (as far as the rich were concerned) had degenerated into mere forms.* The attempt of Agis to bring back the State to its ancient strength, by again admitting the disfranchised poor citizens, re-dividing the lands, cancelling all debts, and restoring the public mess and military training in all their strictness, though it failed—partly from the want of ability in the sincere enthusiast who undertook it, and his misconception of what Lycurgus had really done, partly from its being made too late—at least proves the state of degradation and decrepitude to which Sparta had then fallen, and indicates some of the chief causes of that decrepitude and degradation.

About two thousand years after Agis had paid with his own life, and the lives of his wife and mother,† for the noble and patriotic, but treacherous dream of a regenerated country, the dream of Agis actually became reality, in a nation which was fast

* Grote, vol. ii. p. 527.

† *Ib.* p. 534.

perishing under the evils of a government which, like that of Sparta, favoured an exceedingly unequal distribution of property. The French Revolution, amid many crimes, may certainly be said to have regenerated the French nation as Agis proposed to regenerate the Spartan nation, and by means nearly similar to those proposed by him. It is remarkable, too, that the French king, Louis XVI., a man, like Agis, eminent for his virtues, met with the fate of Agis. As Agis, whose sincerity is attested by the fact that his own property and that of his female relatives, among the largest in the State, were cast in the first sacrifice into the common stock, became the dupe of unprincipled coadjutors, and perished in the vain attempt to realize his scheme by persuasion;* so Louis, with probably as sincere a desire to do what was best for the French nation, perished, like Agis, through the intrigues of the unprincipled people about him. But, though the fate of Louis was like that of Agis, the fate of France was very different from that of Sparta.

* Grote, vol. ii. p. 528.

CHAPTER III.

THE ATHENIANS.

WE have the evidence of the most unexceptionable witnesses,—of Socrates, in so far as Plato can be considered as a trustworthy expounder of the opinions of Socrates, of Plato, of Thucydides, of Demosthenes,—that, at the point of time whereof Adam Smith speaks, Athens no longer possessed, as he affirms, a “gallant and well-exercised militia.”

The Athenian system of military training was never, at its best time, to be compared for excellence to the Spartan. Yet the result at Marathon, and on many other occasions, proved that in its earlier and better days, the Athenian armed force well deserved the description of a “gallant and well-exercised militia.” The fact, too, of such a citizen as Socrates serving repeatedly as a private soldier, proves that then the soldier-citizen system was effectually carried out. At the siege of Potidæa, Socrates won the prize of valour, but voluntarily yielded it to his pupil Alcibiades. Alcibiades himself confessed that he owed his life to Socrates; and that in a certain

action, where he was severely wounded, Socrates alone prevented both his person and his arms from falling into the hands of the enemy. At the battle of Delium, during the Peloponnesian war, where the Athenians were defeated by the Bœotians, Socrates also behaved with the greatest bravery; and it is said that he saved the life of Xenophon, who had fallen from his horse: Strabo says he carried him several furlongs, till he was out of danger. After the battle, as Socrates was retiring with Laches and Alcibiades, he told them that he had just received an admonition not to follow the road that most of their men had taken. They who continued in that road were pursued by the enemy's cavalry, who, coming up with them, killed many on the spot, and took the others prisoners; while Socrates, who had taken another route, arrived safe at Athens with those who accompanied him. The division of labour had not then reached that point when philosophers and politicians could sit in whole skins at home, and with a "dastardly spurt of the pen," or as dastardly a wag of the tongue, send their brethren forth to battles, the dangers of which they did not share.

But if the time for such division of labour had not then actually come, it was fast coming, and was very near at hand. The poison of the orators was rapidly doing its work upon the Athenian democracy; and we have the testimony of Plato for the fatal effect

it produced during the course of one generation. Pericles first introduced the practice of paying the Athenians for attending at the public assemblies, and hearing him harangue. Plato, by the mouth of Socrates in his dialogue the "Gorgias," thus describes the consequences of this measure:—"I hear it said," says Socrates, "that Pericles made the Athenians idlers, and cowards, and gossips, and covetous; being the first who established the system of wages."* The Athenian sovereign multitude found it far pleasanter to be paid for listening to Pericles than to earn an honest subsistence by any sort of labour; and they also found it very far pleasanter to hire foreign mercenaries to fight their battles than to fight those battles themselves; in fact, without going farther than the evidence of those very orators, the public orations of Demosthenes afford abundant proof that, in his time, the Athenian government had fallen into a condition of hopeless imbecility.

Never, perhaps, was the decline of a nation's strength

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 148. Bip:—*Ταυτὶ γὰρ ἔγωγε ἀκούω Περικλέα πεποιηκέναι Ἀθηναίους ἀργούς, καὶ δειλοὺς, καὶ λάλους, καὶ φιλαργύρους, εἰς μισθοφορὰν πρῶτον καταστήσαντα.* The answer to the argument of Demosthenes ("Contra Timokrat." c. 26) that if this payment were suspended the judicial as well as the administrative system of Athens would at once fall to pieces, is, that Athens was stronger before the establishment of it, and the vices and weakness of her government were so great under it, that the falling to pieces of such a system could not make things worse, and might have a chance of making them better.

coincident with the increase of its wealth (using "wealth" not in its primary sense of "weal" or "well-being," but in its now usual sense of "riches") more signally exemplified than in the case of Athens. As the power of Athens extended, and brought tribute from her subject States, the Athenians thus obtained the means of living without labour, and of amusing themselves with poets, painters, sculptors, and orators. The same thing happens, indeed, more or less in the case of every State, as its revenue becomes great. Those who enjoy its revenues become rich, and can afford to devote themselves wholly to amusement. But the result, when those who, in the capacity of sovereign, divide the revenue among them constitute the whole nation, as at Athens, has the effect of making the whole nation averse to labour, and, it would seem, also averse to danger. To use the illustration of Socrates, they are crammed with ports, and docks, and fortifications, and revenues, till they are in a state of bloated repletion, and are neither so healthy nor so strong as when they had no foreign revenues, and a small town so unfortified that they considered it indefensible against the host of the Persians. The result, according to the testimony of Plato, who had the best means of being well-informed on the matter, was to make the Athenians idlers and cowards. The opinion attributing this effect altogether to the mismanagement of Pericles, probably awards to that orator rather more

than in strict justice belongs to him. But we have good authority for the fact that Athens, after the time of Pericles, and indeed at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war (though even then such citizens as Socrates still persevered in performing their military duties), no longer possessed a gallant militia.

The time of the sovereign people was divided between their business and their amusements. Their business consisted in listening to the adulation of their orators; their amusements, in listening to the adulation of their poets: for Socrates proved, in the same Dialogue in which he showed so fully the destructive influence of orators, that even of that grave and magnificent art, Tragic Poetry, the aim was simply to gratify the spectators; since, while it does not avoid things which are pleasant but bad, it does avoid things disagreeable but useful. Poetry on the stage is then a kind of adulatory rhetoric addressed to a popular assembly composed of men, women, and children. It is related that Solon, after hearing Thespis in one of his own compositions, asked him if he was not ashamed to utter such falsehoods before so large an audience? And when Thespis replied that there was no harm in saying and doing such things merely for amusement, Solon indignantly exclaimed, striking the ground with his stick: "If once we come to praise and esteem such amusement as this, we shall quickly find the effects of it in our

daily transactions!"* This applies still more strongly to the subsequent comic writers. The event seemed to confirm the truth of the great Athenian legislator's opinion.

On a certain day in the year 424 before Christ, the comedy called "The Clouds," which Aristophanes had written against Socrates, was performed at Athens. If a stranger at Athens on that day, after visiting the fortifications, the arsenal, the port, and the docks of the Athenians, and hearing the enumeration of their present revenues and of the projects for their future increase by the conquest of Sicily and other countries, had then gone to the theatre and listened to the witty but false and scurrilous representation given by the satirist of the philosopher—in which the only man of that time who had the courage and the wisdom to tell the Athenians the truth as to their political condition, is held up to public ridicule and obloquy, as the representative of those Sophists whom he lived only to refute—the stranger would hardly have thought that the fabric which was so fair to look upon, combining so much material splendour and so much intellectual activity, was already sapped to its foundations, and in a single century from that time would be nothing but a ruin. With all that outside splendour, with all that in-

* Plutarch. *Solon*, 29. Diogen. Laërt. i. 59. Mr. Grote remarks: "It is curious to contrast Solon's reverence for the old epic with the unqualified repugnance which he manifested towards Thespis and the drama."—*History of Greece*, vol. iii. p. 194.

tellectual activity, with all those triumphs of what are called the fine arts, which have excited the admiration of all succeeding generations of civilized men, the Athenian people were then but a nation of Sybarites and cowards; who, amid many crimes, into which injustice and inhumanity entered largely as ingredients—for cowardice and cruelty are proverbially found together—branded themselves with eternal disgrace by the judicial murder of their wisest and most virtuous fellow-citizen—Socrates: though to compare the virtue of Socrates with the general Athenian standard of his age would be doing him but scanty justice.

In regard to the mass of the Athenians it may perhaps be said, with some degree of truth, that with their military virtue had gone all other virtue. Military virtue is sure to be destroyed in time by a bad government, whether that bad government be the government of the few as at Sparta, of the many as at Athens, or of one as at many other places. But it is instructive to note the way in which the corrupting influence of wealth, introducing luxury, and idleness, and aversion to military service, does its work. In a democracy, like Athens, it corrupts directly the whole mass, by giving to each citizen the means of idleness and the dream of power without labour and without danger. In an oligarchy, like Sparta, it corrupts the few who are rich, and destroys the military spirit and patriotism of the rest. In a

despotism of one, it acts somewhat in the same way as in an oligarchy.

Aristophanes has introduced Æschylus in the "Frogs," contending that dramatic works should be so written as to afford instruction; that, as schoolmasters are the teachers of children, poets are the teachers of men.* The result, however, would seem to show that all the teaching of the grave tragic poets, and all the wit and satire of the scurrilous comic poets, are altogether unavailing to open the eyes of men corrupted by power which they know not how to use wisely. But if, according to Socrates and Plato, the poets were as ineffectual guides of the Athenian people as the orators, this at least may be said for some of the comic poets, that if they failed to save their countrymen from the impending ruin, it was not for want of telling them of their personal vices—vices of a kind and degree sufficient to account for the ruin of any State, without reference to the form of government, whether it was an Athenian democracy, a Spartan or Venetian oligarchy, or a Turkish monarchy. We may read what is commonly called History for a lifetime without learning so much about the brutality of Athenian manners and the depravity of Athenian morals, as we may learn from a few lines of the "Acharnians," the "Knights," the "Clouds," the

* ——— τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖσιν δ' ἡβῶσι ποιηταί.

—Aristoph. *Ran.* 1053.

“Plutus,” the “Frogs,” and the “Lysistrata” of Aristophanes. The private morals of the Athenians were on a level with their public morals; which, as will be shown, were summed up in the principle of universal tyranny and plunder.

It would seem as if Adam Smith, having determined to prove the superiority of standing armies over militias, and to find facts in support of his conclusion, was so intent upon this object as to shut his eyes to the facts that were against him, and even to forget, when he asserted that Philip’s standing army vanquished “the gallant and well-exercised militias of the principal republics of ancient Greece,” that he had himself, only about ten pages before, used the following words: “After the second Persian war the armies of Athens seem to have been generally composed of mercenary troops, consisting, indeed, partly of citizens, but partly, too, of foreigners.” Even at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, the Athenians depended chiefly on mercenary forces;* and when, near a century later, Demosthenes was urging them to serve in person, he seemed to regard it as a considerable point gained if he could succeed in getting even a fourth of the force to be raised to consist of Athenian citizens.†

* Thucydides (i. 121) represents the Corinthian ambassadors saying:—*ὦννητή γὰρ Ἀθηναίων ἡ δύναμις μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκεία, ἢ δὲ ἡμετέρα τοῖς σώμασι τοπλέον ἰσχύουσα ἢ τοῖς χρήμασι.*

† *Philipp.* i. c. 8: λέγω δὴ τοὺς πάντας στρατιώτας δισχιλίους· τούτων δὲ, Ἀθηναίους φημί δεῖν εἶναι πεντακοσίους.

Demosthenes also charges them not only with depending almost entirely on mercenaries, but also with paying their mercenaries very irregularly, and even suffering great losses and disasters from not paying them at all.* The generals being often foreigners, as well as those mercenary troops, have no check whatever upon their proceedings, and not only serve ill, but deceive and defraud their employers, the sovereign multitude, engaged at Athens in amusing themselves with their orators and poets.†

It is impossible to conceive any amount of incapacity, feebleness, and disorder beyond that exhibited by the Athenian democracy in the last half-century of its existence—that is, in the half-century before the battle of Chæronea. Their government, as Demosthenes told them, was all talk and no do.‡ And when they did anything, it was always too late.§ They locked the stable door when the horse was stolen.

Having shown that the Athenians were what Socrates describes them as being in his time, I will now endeavour to show the influence of the orators in producing that result.

* *Philipp.* i. c. 9.

† *Philipp.* i. c. 15.

‡ *Olynth.* i. c. 5: ὡς ἅπας μὲν λόγος, ἂν ἀπὸ τὰ πράγματα, μάταιόν τι φαίνεται καὶ κενόν, μάλιστα δὲ ὁ παρὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας πόλεως.

§ *Philipp.* i. c. 14; also *Orat. de Pace*; and *Philipp.* iv. : ἄλλοι πάντες ἄνθρωποι πρὸ τῶν πραγμάτων εἰώθασιν χρῆσθαι τῷ βουλευέσθαι· ὑμεῖς δὲ μετὰ τὰ πράγματα.

If it be true, as Mr. Grote contends,* that not only the oratory of Demosthenes and Pericles, and the colloquial magic of Socrates, but also the philosophical speculations of Plato and the systematic politics, rhetoric, and logic of Aristotle, are traceable to the practice of public speaking in the shape of long harangues and dialectic discussion, it is admitted by the same historian† that the power of speech in the direction of public affairs became more and more obvious, developed, and irresistible towards the culminating period of Grecian history—the century preceding the battle of Chæronea; till at last it reached its highest point and Greece its destruction at the same time. But whether or not it be true that the powers of thought of Socrates and Plato are in any degree attributable to this practice, it appears to me of the first moment to endeavour to show what were the opinions of Plato and his master Socrates respecting the effects of oratory on the well-being of a nation, and how far those opinions were borne out by the result which followed a very few years after Plato's death. The world was too young then to have furnished data for a political philosophy, but it is wonderful how truly the inspiration of Plato had divined what the experience of the succeeding two thousand years was to confirm: namely, that orators are the ruin of every State in which they obtain predominance.

* *History of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 106.

† *Ibid.* p. 105.

The pestilential influence of orators formed, according to the evidence of Plato's *Dialogues*, the constant topic of Socrates' advice and warnings to his countrymen. The *Gorgias* in particular, one of the most celebrated of Plato's works, is almost entirely devoted to that subject. When one reads the *Gorgias* of Plato, and sees how Socrates establishes his conclusions by arguments, to use his own words, strong as iron and adamant,* and reflects how little effect for good those arguments produced upon his countrymen, and that with that foolish democracy the sophistry and adulation of demagogues bore down the wisdom enforced by the "colloquial magic" of Socrates, one may well be tempted to despair for mankind, and to feel that, as those arguments were, when uttered, ineffectual to save a State rushing to its destruction, so to attempt to reproduce any of them now will be but a labour in vain. Nevertheless, I will state shortly some of his conclusions.

He points out the constant habit of orators and sophists (for Socrates classes them together: a sophist and an orator, he says, are the same thing, or very nearly so,†) of answering a short question by a long harangue beside the point. Thus in the *Protagoras*, Protagoras having made a very long speech, instead of giving a short answer to a short question, Socrates

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 134, Bip.: *σιδηροῖς καὶ ἀδαμαντίνους λόγοις.*

† Plat. *Gorg.* p. 157, Bip.: *Ταυτὸν ἐστὶ σοφιστῆς καὶ ῥήτωρ, ἢ ἐγγύς τι καὶ παραπλήσιον.*

said:—"If a man were to apply to Pericles, or any other of the famous orators, he might hear from them as fine a speech as that which Protagoras has made: but if he were to put a question to them, they could no more answer, or ask again, than an inanimate book; but like brass, which if struck gives out a loud sound, and makes a long reverberation, unless some one lays hold of it and stops it, so the orators make answer to a short question by an inordinately long harangue."* Farther on in the same Dialogue, where Socrates is pressing Protagoras hard on the point under discussion, Protagoras again flies off into a long speech, filled with illustrations, on a topic very distantly connected with that which they were discussing. At the conclusion of this by-the-mark oration, he was loudly applauded. Whereupon Socrates observed that he had a short memory (as many of us have, at least, for long speeches), and that if a man made a long speech to him he always forgot what it was about. As therefore, if he were deaf, Protagoras would think it necessary to speak to him in a louder than his ordinary voice, so, as he was forgetful, he hoped that Protagoras would shorten his answers, and accommodate their length to his capacity. Upon this, Protagoras lost his temper, as sophists and orators are apt to do when their sovereign infallibility is questioned.

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates being asked by Polus

* Plat. *Prot.* p. 124, Bip.

to tell him what *art* he considers rhetoric to be, answers, "No art at all: though a kind of skill." Being further questioned, he says that he also considers cookery to be no art, but a kind of skill, like rhetoric; and that cookery and rhetoric are branches of the same pursuit. Being asked what pursuit, he replies that he fears it would be ill-bred to say the truth; that he does not like to say it, lest he should appear to be satirizing Gorgias' profession. Gorgias desiring him to speak freely, Socrates said that he considered rhetoric to be a pursuit not governed by art, but belonging to a mind adroit, and bold, and eminently fitted by nature for intercourse with men: that he called it, in short, adulation.

The word used by Plato, which I have here translated "bold," is *ἀνδρείας*, which properly means "manly, masculine, courageous." Hobbes uses a different word to express his notion of the leading quality of the rhetorical mind: "Impudence in democratical assemblies does almost all that's done; 'tis the goddess of rhetoric, and carries proof with it. For what ordinary man will not from so great boldness of affirmation conclude there is great probability in the thing affirmed?"*

It may be of importance to call attention here to the great disadvantage in the modern systems of education, arising from the works of Cicero being so much more studied and put into the hands of the

* Hobbes' *Behemoth*, p. 113: ed. London, 1682.

young than those of Plato. Cicero was as inferior to Socrates in real courage as in true philosophy. His idea of the highest type of human nature is what he calls a perfect orator, that is, a man who carries this pursuit, which Plato in the *Gorgias* proves to be so base and pernicious an employment of the intellectual faculties, to its utmost height. In doing this, instead of enforcing by example and precept, simplicity, compactness, and perspicuity in language by the use of the fewest and most apt and simple words, arranged in their most natural order, he has introduced into language verbosity, complication, confusion, and what is falsely called "fine" writing. And the tendency of modern education being to make pedants, not practical men of business, or great statesmen and great warriors, he is admired and imitated, while the true view of the question, as developed by Socrates and Plato, is unknown or kept out of sight. It is a remarkable proof of this, that in his Dialogue *De Oratore*, in which he imitates the *form* of Plato's *Dialogues*, which was all he was capable of imitating—for Plato's dialectical powers and dramatic talent were equally beyond his reach—he introduces one of the speakers enunciating this opinion, which Plato had put into the mouth of Socrates in the *Gorgias*—that eloquence is not an art, because it depends not on knowledge, and that the great object of an orator is to recommend himself to his clients and to prepossess the judges in

his favour—only for the purpose of refuting him. No one who is competent to give an opinion on the subject would hesitate for a moment as to the comparative value of the arguments of Cicero and Plato. Dr. Franklin, who in some points of his character bore a considerable resemblance to Socrates, has in his *Autobiography* pointed out the importance of teaching young men to discuss rather than to harangue—of practising them in dialectics rather than in rhetoric. But, unfortunately, the works of the “fine-writing” pedants are the books in repute with those who have the control of modern education both in England and America.*

Socrates having shown what sort of a thing oratory is, then proceeds to show to what ends orators use the power they attain in a State, and to prove by one of the most remarkable displays of his wonderful dialectical powers, by a demonstration as close and as clear as any in Euclid, that to injure is a greater evil than to be injured; that injustice is the greatest of evils, punishment the cure of it, impunity the permanence of it; to be unjust and to be punished, the greatest of all evils except one; to be unjust with impunity the greatest of all. He thence concludes that rhetoric is of no use to us for defending our own injustice, or that of our friends or our country. In the

* The notes and commentaries in the editions of *Select Orations of Cicero*, recently published both in England and America, for the use of schools and colleges, may be cited as examples of this.

course of the discussion, he says to Polus: "Do you think it a good thing for a person to accomplish what he thinks fit, if he is without good sense? And is this what you call being powerful?" "No," replies Polus. "Then," continues Socrates, "if you would refute me, you must show that orators have good sense, and that rhetoric is an art, and not an adulation. But though you should leave me unrefuted, orators and despots, who do whatever they think fit in a State, will be never the better for it. Power, you say, is a good thing. But to effect what we think fit, being without good sense, you yourself allow to be a bad thing." He thence concludes that if any one, being an orator or a despot, unjustly kills any one, or banishes him, or takes from him his property, thinking it to be a good thing for him to do so, when in reality it is a bad thing, such power is an evil for the orator or the despot himself as well as for others; and they who possess it are unenviable and miserable.

Socrates having then shown that when the government is either a monarchical despotism or a democracy (like that of Athens), if any man wishes to become very powerful in the State, his best plan for attaining that end is to accustom himself from his youth upwards to resemble the despot or the democracy as much as possible, in order to acquire influence by adroit adulation; that by this means he will have obtained the power of doing with impunity

the greatest possible quantity of injustice, and will then be afflicted with the greatest of evils, being evil in mind, and being corrupted by power, and by the imitation of his master; Callicles asks him if he does not know that this imitator will, if he pleases, be able to destroy the non-imitator, and take his property? Socrates replies, "Surely I do, if I am not deaf, having heard it so often from you and Polus, and from nearly every other person in Athens." This question of Callicles and this answer of Socrates sufficiently set forth the Athenian main principle of public morality at that time—a principle of universal tyranny and plunder.

The ambassador from the Athenians to Camarina, during the Peloponnesian war, sums it up in a few words: "To a tyrant" (that is, a sovereign prince), "or a sovereign city or state, nothing is unreasonable which is profitable."* This is precisely the same as the Roman sole principle of public morals, namely, the extension of the empire.

If Pericles had been the good statesman his admirers called him, he must of necessity have made the Athenians better men than they were when he first began to govern them. But Socrates contends that the result proved that he failed in this first requisite of a good statesman, inasmuch as he left them more unjust and more ferocious than he

* Thucyd. vi. 85: Ἄνδρι δὲ τυράννῳ, ἢ πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ, οὐδὲν ἄλογον, ὅ, τι ξυμφόρον.

received them. "A superintendent of asses," says Socrates, "or of horses or oxen, would be thought a very bad one, if the animals did not kick, and start, and bite when they were intrusted to him, but did all this when they quitted his charge."* And he says such politicians bear the same relation to good statesmen as authors of cookery-books and tavern-keepers to good gymnasts or superintendents of the body. As cooks and tavern-keepers cram the body and bring on repletion and disease, and are nevertheless eulogized by the ignorant, in like manner, says Socrates, are eulogized "the men who, having feasted the Athenians and crammed them with what they desire, are said to have made them a great nation: because it is not perceived that the commonwealth is swollen and hollow, through those men of antiquity; for, without making us just or temperate, they have crammed us with ports, and docks, and fortifications, and revenues, and such trumpery."†

This precisely agrees with the opinion of Bacon,

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 149, Bip. Socrates afterwards compares a statesman complaining of injustice from the State which he has ruled to a sophist professing to teach virtue complaining of his pupils not paying his fee. This, he says, is absurd, since it is evident that if the sophist had taught them what he professed to teach, virtue and justice, they could not have committed the injustice of defrauding him of his hire. The statesman and the sophist, therefore, who have been treated thus, have no right to complain, since their being so treated proves that they have not performed what they undertook, namely, the one to make his fellow-citizens or subjects, the other his pupils, just and virtuous.

† Plat. *Gorg.* p. 155, Bip.

formed from a much larger historical experience than that of Socrates and Plato. "Walled towns," he says, in his *Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*, "stored arsenals and armories, goodly races of horses, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance, artillery, and the like,—all this is but a sheep in a lion's skin, except the breed and disposition of the people be stout and warlike."

Socrates, being reminded by Callicles that under the sort of *liberty* then existing at Athens, he could be brought into danger of his life, perhaps by a worthless man, answers: "I must be very foolish if I did not know that in this State any one whatever may be so treated."* He thus predicts his own fate and the resignation and fortitude with which he will meet it: "I shall be judged," he says, "as a physician would, if tried before children on the accusation of a cook, who would say, 'See what evils this man has inflicted upon you, cutting, and burning, and emaciating you, giving you bitter draughts, and forcing you to fast! not like me, who have feasted you with everything that is delightful.' What could the physician say to all this? If he said the truth, 'I did all these things for your health,' would not such judges hoot him down? I well know that I myself should be treated in a similar manner, if I were brought before a court of justice. For I shall not be able to remind the judges of any pleasures that I have procured for

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 160, Bip.

them, which are what they understand by benefits. And if any one should say that I corrupt the youth by unsettling their minds, or libel the older men by bitter speeches, either in private or in public, I shall neither be able to say the truth, namely, ‘I say and do all these things justly, and therefore for your good;’ nor shall I have any other defence; so that I must be content to undergo my fate.”

C. “Does a man, then, who is thus situated—so unable to protect himself—appear to you to be as he should be?”

S. “If that be in him, of which we have so often spoken: if he have protected himself by never having said or done anything unjust, either towards men or gods. For this is, as we have frequently admitted, the best sort of self-protection. If, therefore, any one should convict me of being incapable of affording *this* protection to myself or others, I should be ashamed, whether I were convicted in the presence of many, or of one only; and if I were to perish from this kind of incapability, I should be grieved; but if I should die for want of Adulatory Rhetoric, I should bear my death very easily. Death itself no one fears, who is not altogether irrational and unmanly; but to commit injustice is an object of rational fear, for to arrive in the other world with the soul loaded with crimes, is the greatest of evils.”*

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 163, Bip. I have, in the translations from Plato in this chapter, availed myself of some valuable “Notes on

To sum up in a few words what is said in this Dialogue of Plato respecting the nature of rhetoric :—To learn or know, and to believe—in other words, knowledge and belief—are different things.* But they who have learnt and they who only believe are both persuaded. There are, then, two kinds of persuasion—the one affording belief without knowledge, the other affording knowledge. When an assembly is called together for the choice of generals or the operations of warfare, if the assembly be governed by orators, the orators will advise, and not the men versed in military affairs. If the question relate to the building of walls, or the construction of harbours or docks, the advisers again will be the rhetoricians, not the engineers. Gorgias, in this Dialogue, says to Socrates that he could make any person who received his instructions, an orator capable of persuading a multitude; not producing knowledge in their minds, but belief; that, for instance, on the subject of health and disease, an orator would be more capable of persuading than a physician, in some of the Dialogues of Plato,” published in the *Monthly Repository* in 1834; departing from that translation in some places where the Greek did not seem to be fully or exactly rendered.

* ΣΩ. Πότερον οὖν ταυτὸν δοκεῖ σοι εἶναι μεμαθηκέναι καὶ πεπιστευκέναι, καὶ μάθησις καὶ πίστις, ἢ ἄλλο τι; ΓΟΡ. Οἶομαι μὲν ἔγωγε, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἄλλο. ΣΩ. Καλῶς γὰρ οἶει, γνώσῃ δὲ ἐνθένδε· εἰ γάρ τις σὲ ἔροιτο, ἄρ' ἔστι, ὦ Γοργία, πίστις ψευδῆς καὶ ἀληθῆς, φαίης ἂν, ὥς ἐγώ μαι. ΓΟΡ. Ναί. ΣΩ. Τί δέ; ἐπιστήμη ἔστι ψευδῆς καὶ ἀληθῆς; ΓΟΡ. Οὐ δῆτα. ΣΩ. Δῆλον γὰρ οὖν ὅτι οὐ ταυτὸν ἔστιν. ΓΟΡ. Ἀληθὴ λέγεις, κ. τ. λ.—*Plat. Gorg.* p. 20, Bip.

a multitude, or among those who are ignorant. In other words, one who does not know, provided he be a rhetorician, will be more persuasive among those who do not know, than one who does know.

But this, it is to be observed, will only take place to the full extent in an assembly like that of the Athenian democracy, where one orator followed another, and one long harangue followed another long harangue, and where there was no opportunity for questioning each speaker, and sifting the accuracy of his assertions, or testing the soundness of his views, which he put forth with that boldness of affirmation that carries proof with it to the minds of ordinary men. An orator, moreover, of great tact and ability will mould his adulation of the multitude whom he addresses into such a form as to make it assume the appearance of the reverse of adulation. This is particularly observable in the orations of the greatest of Athenian orators. The public orations of Demosthenes are full of instances which make it appear as if he gave the Athenians, not adulation, but bitter truths. But these apparently harsh things are tempered with occasional compliments, that render his mode of appealing to the Athenian people very different from that of Socrates. However, when Demosthenes addressed them, the Athenians felt that their affairs were in so unprosperous a condition, that he could say things to them for which they would have hooted down, and perhaps condemned to death,

any orator fifty years before. But a multitude of five or six thousand men is much too large for deliberative discussion: and the principle of representation was then unknown.

Some measure limiting the duration of all speeches to a quarter of an hour (time enough for a speech as long as a leader in *The Times*), with some exceptions in favour of ministers making official statements, would make the English Parliament nearly perfect as a deliberative assembly. It always contains a very great number of men of good sense and practical knowledge. But under the present system these men are borne down by some half-dozen rhetoricians, who catch the Speaker's eye when men of sense fail to catch it, and who not only waste the public time with their orations, but, according to the present system, obtain most of the great offices of the government, and by that means have the opportunity of displaying their want of all practical knowledge and ability in the misgovernment of the country. The practical wisdom of the nation, of which the English Parliament is the representative, has in the course of many ages laid down a set of rules for the management of deliberative discussion in Parliament. These rules completely get rid of the difficulties which in almost all other assemblies of men, public or private, have beset discussion, and rendered it ineffective for the object of a full, exact, and temperate investigation of the question.

“I think, Gorgias,” says Socrates, “that you have had experience of many discussions, and must have perceived this: that men seldom know how jointly to examine and mark out the things about which they attempt to discuss; and having learnt and instructed themselves, so to break off the conversation. But if they dispute on any matter, and one of them charges the other with not speaking rightly, or not clearly, they are angry, and think that it is said in envy, and for the sake of victory, and not in the pursuit of the proposed object of discourse; and they sometimes end by shamefully reproaching one another, and bandying such words as make the bystanders ashamed of themselves for having desired to listen to such men.”* Consequently, to obtain such a discussion as Socrates and Franklin might have approved of in the English Parliament, the only thing required is to muzzle the men who make inordinately long harangues, by limiting their speeches to a quarter of an hour.

It may be shown from innumerable passages in

* Plat. *Gorg.* p. 26, Bip. Οἶμαι, ὦ Γοργία, καὶ σὲ ἔμπειρον, εἶναι πολλῶν λόγων καὶ καθεωρακέναι ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸ τοιόνδε, ὅτι οὐ ῥαδίως δύνανται οἱ ἄνθρωποι, περὶ ὧν ἂν ἐπιχειρήσωσι διαλέγεσθαι, διορισάμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ μαθόντες καὶ διδάξαντες ἑαυτοὺς, οὕτω διαλέεσθαι τὰς συνουσίας· ἀλλ’ ἐὰν περὶ τοῦ ἀμφισβητήσωσι καὶ μὴ φῶ ὁ ἕτερος τὸν ἕτερον ὀρθῶς λέγειν ἢ μὴ σαφῶς, χαλεπαίνουσί τε καὶ κατὰ φθόνον οἶονται τὸν ἑαυτῶν λέγειν, φιλονεικοῦντας, ἀλλ’ οὐ ζητοῦντας τὸ προκείμενον ἐν τῷ λόγῳ· καὶ ἔνιοί γε τελευτῶντες αἰσχιστα ἀπαλλάττονται λαιδορηθέντες τε καὶ εἰπόντες καὶ ἀκούσαντες περὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν τοιαῦτα, ὅσα καὶ τοὺς παρόντας ἀχθεσθαι ὑπὲρ σφῶν αὐτῶν, ὅτι τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων ἡξίωσαν ἀκροαταὶ γενέσθαι.

the writings of Plato that, in the opinion of the wisest man Athens ever produced, it was the orators who, in their adulation of the people for their own purposes, destroyed the Athenian commonwealth. And if the passages cited in this chapter from Demosthenes be considered as showing that his oratory was certainly not all adulation, since he told them many bitter truths, the orators who preceded him had already done so much mischief that a much greater man than Demosthenes—a man like Epaminondas, a first-rate general as well as a first-rate statesman—would probably have been quite as unable as Demosthenes to save Athens.

Even in a government like that of England, the power of orators has been great for the last 200 years. How much greater it would become if that government were assimilated much more than it is at present to the Athenian democracy, may be inferred from the known power of the orators in the latter days of Athenian independence. Socrates, in Plato's Dialogues, uses the word Orator as equivalent sometimes to Sophist, and sometimes to Despot. He represents orators as men having, without being either wise or just men, the absolute power of life and death, confiscation and ruin, over their fellow-citizens.

If the field for the exercise of rhetoric and sophistry in the deliberative national assembly of England were effectually checked, the extension of

the suffrage might be a safe and a beneficial measure. But if such a measure is carried out to any considerable extent before the other measure of preventing the rhetorical sophists from working their mischief, we shall only exchange one set of bad and dangerous rulers for another set of rulers still worse and still more dangerous.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROMANS.

THE Romans were not less attentive than the Greeks to athletic exercises. Plutarch relates what pains Cato the Censor took in training his son in throwing the javelin, in riding, in swimming rapid rivers, in enduring heat and cold; how Marius, throwing off his old age and his infirmities, went daily to the Campus Martius, where he took his exercises with the young men; and how Julius Cæsar did not make his feeble health an excuse for indulgence, but by unwearied exercise and frugal diet, by constantly keeping in the open air and enduring fatigue, struggled with his malady, and kept his body proof against its attacks. The effect of the Roman system of athletic exercises in strengthening and hardening their bodies, appears from the fact that a Roman soldier usually carried a load of sixty pounds weight, besides his arms; that under this load the soldier commonly marched twenty miles a day, sometimes more, usually completing the day's march in five hours, that is, marching twenty miles in five hours, some-

times twenty-four miles in that time. But the Roman system of training, while, like the Spartan, it cultivated the physical qualities of bodily strength, activity, and endurance, with the moral qualities of fortitude and patriotism, did not cultivate in the least degree, like the Spartan also, the moral qualities of justice and humanity. Their leading principle, to which all others gave way, was the extension of the empire ; in other words, universal dominion and universal plunder.

Nevertheless, the Roman constitution, or system of government, possessed elements of duration which did not belong either to the Spartan or Athenian system. The Spartan government was, as we have seen, an almost pure oligarchy, the Athenian an almost pure democracy ; each of which worked out rapidly its own destruction, without check or counterpoise. On the other hand, the Roman system of government had in it the two elements of oligarchy and democracy, which acted as checks on one another ; for a time at least. It is true that they mostly acted in such a way that now the one predominated, and now the other. At last, however, after great struggles, the government of Rome was brought to a just equilibrium, under which there was no insurmountable obstruction to merit. The republic was thus managed for several ages without internal discord. But as wealth and luxury increased, especially after the destruction of Carthage, the more wealthy ple-

beians united with the patricians, and the two parties of rich men, the old and the new, engrossed between them all the honours and emoluments of the State. The body of the people were impoverished and oppressed, and at the same time brutalized by the gladiatorial shows, while they were also thoroughly corrupted by idleness and by dependence for food upon those public men who intended to use them for their own purposes.

We thus see that while, for a time, the government of Rome enjoyed the advantages of a combination of the oligarchical government of Sparta and the democratical government of Athens, it afterwards suffered at once from the evils of both kinds of government. In this state of things the Roman plebeians became the ready instruments, first, in the hands of Marius, and afterwards in those of Julius Cæsar, for the complete destruction of the Roman constitution. Then came to pass in Rome what, as we have seen, had before come to pass in Sparta and Athens—the total destruction of the military spirit of the people, and of their ability to defend themselves from foreign aggression; and those who had conquered and oppressed nearly all the world were conquered and oppressed in their turn.

The cause of the disease, in this as in all similar cases, was bad government. But it may be instructive to note some of the symptoms of this disease.

In the earlier period of Roman history, when the

political constitution of Rome was strong and healthy, individuals were restricted by law to a small portion of land, men cultivated their own farms with their own hands, and the republic could always command the service of an abundance of hardy and brave soldiers when there was need of them. But when landed property was engrossed by a few, whose immense estates were, in a great measure, cultivated by slaves, Rome was forced to depend on the provinces, both for supplies of provisions, and of men to recruit her armies.* Hence Pliny may be considered as having correctly pointed out at least one of the principal symptoms of the great disease which destroyed the Roman empire, when he ascribes the ruin, first of Italy, and then of the provinces, to too extensive landed possessions.† The evil had become very great in the time of Horace, who contrasts the Roman youth of his day, born and brought up amid licentious luxury, with the hardy sons of rustic soldiers who resisted Pyrrhus and Hannibal, and had been used to till the earth, and to cut and carry home wood at the command of their austere mothers.‡

* Juvenal, ix. 55; Liv. vi. 12; Senec. *Ep.* 114. Whether the produce of the land under the cultivation of slaves was less or not, Rome's dependence on the provinces for provisions might be partly owing to her immensely increased population.

† xviii. 3, 6: *Latifundia* (sc. *nimis ampla*) *perdidere Italiam; jam vero et provincias.*

‡ Hor. *Carm.* iii. 6. The picture Horace here gives of the Roman vices of his time hardly falls short of those given by Juvenal.

This opinion is supported by that of Lord Bacon, who ascribes the fact that "England, though far less in territory and population, had been nevertheless an overmatch for France," to the great abundance in England of substantial yeomen and small freeholders. "And herein," Bacon adds, in the Essay before referred to, "the device of King Henry the Seventh (whereof I have spoken largely in the history of his life) was profound and admirable, in making farms and houses of husbandry of a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty, and no servile condition; and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners, and not mere hirelings."

In accordance with the notion, which appears to have been generally entertained in the ancient world, that every citizen of a country should be a landholder, and also with the principle that the State should be the chief landlord, the practice at Rome was that the territory of the State, so far as it was not left unenclosed or reserved for public purposes, should be divided in equal portions among the citizens. At first, no citizen had more land than he could cultivate himself. Romulus allotted to each only two acres: a regulation corresponding with the law of Queen Elizabeth, that no cottage should be built with less than four acres of land attached to it.*

* Stat. 31 Eliz. c. 7.

After the expulsion of the kings, seven acres were granted to each citizen, which continued for a long time, and indeed as long as the republic retained its pristine health and strength, to be the usual portion assigned them in the division of conquered lands.* Quinctius Cincinnatus, Curius Dentatus, Fabricius, and Regulus had no more.† Cincinnatus had only four acres, according to Columella. This corresponds, in a remarkable degree, with the very large number of small landholders in England two or three centuries ago; there having been between forty and fifty freeholders in every hamlet, in the fifteenth century, according to the testimony of Fortescue.

The part of the Roman territory left unenclosed was mostly kept as pasture, and a revenue was raised from it, both from citizens and strangers, who turned out sheep or cattle upon it. When a new territory was gained in war—the richer parts of it already in cultivation being too valuable to be given up to pasture, and the division, if they were divided, being necessarily subject to the general rule which allotted an equal portion to every citizen—it was the practice at Rome to allow individuals to occupy such lands, and to enjoy all the benefits of them, on condition of paying to the State the tithe of the produce, both as a rent and an acknowledgment that the State was the proprietor of the land. On this principle most of the kings of Rome are said to have carried an

* Liv. v. 30; Val. Max. iv. 3, 5.

† Val. Max. iv. 4, 6, 7.

agrarian law; that is, to have divided a portion of the public land among those whom they admitted to the rights of citizenship. But these new citizens, the Roman commons, though they received their portion of land as freehold whenever the public land was divided, had still no right to occupy it (as they were not a part of the *populus*) while it lay in the mass unallotted; while the old burghers, the patricians, who enjoyed exclusively the right of occupation with regard to the undivided public land, had no share in it when divided, because they already enjoyed from ancient allotment a freehold property of their own. Hence the public land was wholly unprofitable to the commons while it was undivided, and became wholly lost to the patricians when it was divided; and hence the violent hostility of the patricians to agrarian laws.* The success of the patricians in their struggle with the commons on this point, which enabled individuals to engross such large masses of landed property, proved in the end their own destruction and that of their country.†

Another symptom of the decay of a nation's strength, closely connected with the symptom last mentioned, is the immense accumulation of wealth in a few hands, and the use made of that wealth for corruption and luxury. Crassus is said to have

* The above passage contains the substance of Niebuhr's researches as to this point.—Arnold's *Hist. of Rome*, vol. i. p. 156.

† Plin. xviii. 3, 6.

possessed in lands upwards of 1,600,000*l.*, besides money, slaves, and household furniture, which may be estimated at as much more.* Seneca is recorded to have possessed 2,421,875*l.*; † Pallas, the freedman of Claudius, an equal sum; ‡ Lentulus, the augur, 3,229,166*l.*§ But the effect of the immense accumulation of wealth in a few hands, with the power of corruption which this wealth possessed, either in the hands of its owners or of those who found means to borrow it, is most strikingly exemplified in the career of Cæsar, the dictator. Cæsar, before he enjoyed any office, owed 1,300 talents, or 251,875*l.*|| When, after his prætorship, he set out for Spain, he is reported to have said, that he was “bis millies et quingenties,” more than two million pounds sterling, worse than nothing.¶ He is said to have purchased the friendship of Curio at the beginning of the civil war by a bribe of “sexcenties sestertiûm” (484,373*l.*); and that of the Consul L. Paulus for 1,500 talents, about 279,500*l.*** Lucan says of Curio: “Hic vendidit urbem;” and Virgil is thought to refer to him when he says, “Vendidit hic auro patriam.” No man ever understood better than Cæsar the art of corrupting by money. When he was about to lead his army, with which he had conquered Gaul, into Spain to fight

* Plin. xxxiii. 10, 47.

† Tacit. *Ann.* xii. 53.

‡ Plutarch.

** Dio, xl. 60; Plut. in Cæs. et Pomp.; Suet. Cæs. 29.

† Tacit. *Ann.* xiii. 42.

§ Senec. *de Benef.* ii. 27.

¶ Appian. *de Bell. Civ.* ii. 432.

against Roman legions led by Roman generals, he wished to take every precaution to secure the adherence to himself of his officers and soldiers. The plan he hit upon was to borrow money from his officers, and distribute it to his soldiers. By which means, to use his own words, he accomplished two things; he secured the adherence of the officers by the debt, that of the soldiers by the gratuity.*

Another mode in which this unwholesome accumulation of wealth in a few hands showed itself, was in luxurious living, personal ornaments, and houses. Apicius wasted on luxurious living about half a million sterling. Caligula laid out on a supper upwards of 80,000*l.*; and Heliogabalus, upwards of 24,000*l.* The ordinary expense of Lucullus for a supper in the Hall of Apollo, was 50,000 drachmæ (1,614*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*). Pliny says, that in his time Lollia Paulina wore, in full dress, jewels to the value of “quadragies sestertiûm” (32,201*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*); or, as others read the passage, “quadringenties sestertiûm”† (322,916*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*). Julius Cæsar presented Servilia, the mother of M. Brutus, with a pearl worth “sexagies sestertia”‡ (48,417*l.* 10*s.*). There seems to be an association between certain vices and a profuse and ostentatious extravagance in dress, both in men and women; but

* “Simul a tribunis militum, centurionibusque mutuas pecunias sumsit: has exercitui distribuit. Quo facto duas res consecutus est, quod pignore animos centurionum devinxit, et largitione redemit militum voluntates.”—Cæs. *de Bell. Civ.* i. 39.

† Plin. x. 35, s. 57.

‡ Suet. *Cæs.* 50.

particularly in the latter. The Countess of Somerset, the murderess of Sir Thomas Overbury (and, as was suspected, of Prince Henry), wore, on the occasion of her marriage with the Earl of Somerset, a coronet which was valued at 400,000 dollars; and the clothes of the Earl of Somerset, also, were covered with precious stones.* Agrippina, the wife of the Emperor Claudius, who, like the English countess above mentioned, was an adulteress and murderess, appeared in public, on one occasion, in a magnificent robe, which, as some read the passage, was a tissue of pure gold, without any intermixture of other materials.† Caligula was costly and effeminate in his dress, to such a degree as to appear in shoes composed of pearls. The effect of this upon the dress of the Roman women of that time may be judged of by what appears at the present day, when we see many women, without regard to the means of their fathers and husbands, striving to ape queens and empresses in the extravagance and costliness of their dress. It is not such foolish luxury that enables women to produce the men who constitute the real strength of a nation — men “such as the Doric mothers bore.”

It is undoubtedly a mark of the prosperity and well-being of a nation that the great bulk of the

* Despatch of Spifame, the French ambassador, in Raumer's *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ii. 232.

† Tac. *Ann.* xii. 56.

inhabitants should dwell in houses which are sufficiently large and well-constructed for the promotion of cleanliness and health. But such houses may be as well constructed of brick as of marble. It was a boast of Augustus that he had found Rome of brick, but should leave it of marble.* It would have been better for Rome if Augustus had left Rome of brick, provided that he could also have left it, or restored to it, the elements of national strength which it had possessed in its earlier days. But while all the elements of strength were crumbling to dust, the costliness of houses of all kinds rapidly increased. Thus the house of Lapidus, which in the time of his consulship was reckoned one of the finest in Rome, was not in the hundredth rank thirty-five years after.† The golden house of Nero must have cost an immense sum, since Otho laid out, in finishing a part of it, 403,645*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*‡ M. Scaurus is reported to have lost by the burning of his villa, *H. s. millies*, 807,291*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*:§ perhaps a larger sum than any of those persons who have depopulated the Highlands of Scotland could boast of having laid out on the palaces, rivalling those of princes, which they have built, or are building, on the proceeds of their Highland *improvements*.

But as the Roman rich man looked round in vain in the hour of his agony for those hardy soldiers,

* Suet. *Aug.* 29.

† Plin. xxxvi. 15, s. 24.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

made in other days out of the small farmers who tilled their farms with their own hands, and whose march, steady though toilsome, had ever been to victory, so, to repeat the warning of Sir Walter Scott, the hour may not be far distant when those Highland chiefs may bitterly rue the day when they exchanged for a larger rent-roll, with palaces and menials and all the other luxuries wealth can purchase, so many thousand "hill-plaids and true hearts that wore them,"—so many thousand bayonets, or "steel blades and strong hands that bore them."

Lord Bacon says, with reference to the saying of Themistocles, that "he could not fiddle, but yet he could make a small town a great city," that "if a true survey be taken of counsellors and statesmen, there may be found (though rarely) those which can make a small State great, and yet cannot fiddle; as, on the other side, there will be found a great many that can fiddle very cunningly, but yet are so far from being able to make a small State great, as their gift lieth the other way: to bring a great and flourishing State to ruin and decay." To which of these classes of statesmen the persons who do such things, and their abettors, belong, let the judgment of mankind determine.

After the first great question, What is the disease? the next is, Is it curable?

One obvious enough method of cure is to attempt to bring back the constitution to that state in which

it appeared to be healthy. Though in a certain sense the government of Rome could never have been a very good one, yet its early constitution undoubtedly possessed some of the qualities of strength in a remarkable degree. The constitutional legislation of Sulla was an attempt to restore at least some of the essential elements of the old Roman constitution. Whether it would have had any chance of success, we cannot say: for the usurpation of Cæsar soon after swept it all away; and in Rome, the forms as well as the substance of liberty perished for ever.

In order to learn how far such a method of cure for this great national disease is applicable in any case, it will be necessary, first, to see whether there was a time when such nation had a healthy constitution; then, by what causes it lost such constitution. If this inquiry is fairly and clearly conducted, the remedy, if there be one, ought to be obvious enough.

Adam Smith having assumed standing armies to be the universal cause of the strength of nations, and having attempted, as we have seen, to account for the subjection of Greece by the Macedonians on that principle, proceeds to apply the same explanation to the ascendancy of Rome. After mentioning the rise of the Macedonians and their conquests as the first great revolution in the affairs of mankind, he goes on to say: "The fall of Carthage, and the conse-

quent elevation of Rome, is the second. "All the varieties in the fortune of those two famous republics may very well be accounted for, from the same cause." So far is this from being the fact, that they may very well be accounted for from the superiority of a *good* militia over a standing army.

We know extremely little about the government of Carthage, but we know that it had not a territory of sufficient extent to furnish the materials of a good militia, which Rome had; and at that time the militia of Rome possessed all the conditions of excellence, consisting of hardy soldiers (who for the most part tilled their own small farms with their own hands), led by officers whom they knew and trusted, and who were always willing to sacrifice their lives in the defence of their country. And such have always constituted the conditions of a real militia, whether under the Spartan or Roman burgher, the feudal baron or the Highland chief, when all alike obeyed the summons of duty:

"Chief, vassal, page, and groom, tenant and master;"

and as on Flodden's fatal field—

"Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell;
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well."

In regard to Hannibal, any one who has carefully read the history of his campaigns knows that the troops on which he depended most were his Spanish

infantry and his Numidian horse ; which shows that Carthage could not furnish from her own territory the materials either of a militia or a standing army. It is indeed true, as Adam Smith says, that Scipio's militia became a well-disciplined and well-exercised standing army, which the troops that Hannibal had hastily got together were unable to withstand at the battle of Zama. But why were the many victories, each of them far greater than Scipio's victory at Zama, gained by Hannibal in Italy, not followed by the fall of Rome, while Scipio's victory at Zama was followed by the ruin of Carthage ? Precisely because Rome had a substantial militia, and Carthage had no such militia.

“ From the end of the second Carthaginian war,” continues the same writer, “ till the fall of the Roman republic, the armies of Rome were in every respect standing armies.” And what was the consequence ? From that time the real strength of Rome began to decline ; even though in the brief period of fifty-three years Rome conquered the greater part of the world—so little is extensive empire a proof of real strength in a nation : a fact which it would be well for some modern nations, particularly England, to ponder on.

Adam Smith then proceeds to attribute the success that attended the Roman armies to their being standing armies, while, with the exception of Macedon, the forces opposed to them were militias. The real cause of the success of the Roman armies was that they

were superior in knowledge of the art of war to all those whom they attacked, and in such civilization as then existed to all, with the exception of Greece, Syria, and Egypt—nations which had long lost all their manly and military qualities.

So eager is Adam Smith to depreciate militias, that he attempts to account for the ultimate ruin of the Roman empire, not from its true cause—its being without the materials to form either a good militia or a good standing army—but by giving to its demoralized standing army the name of a militia.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPANIARDS AND THE TURKS.

WE have seen, in the cases of Sparta and Rome, how nations, by assiduously cultivating the qualities of courage, hardihood, temperance, and patriotism in their citizens,—by, to use the words of Lord Bacon, “professing arms as their principal honour, study, and occupation,” have become powerful. We have also seen how, in the course of time, when, by the operation of a bad government, the qualities of fortitude, temperance, and patriotism were no longer encouraged and cultivated, but, on the contrary, were discouraged and neglected, those same nations became weak, and lost, first, their power, and then altogether their place among nations. But the power of a bad government varies in the mode of its operation in the destruction of a nation’s strength, being sometimes very rapid, sometimes comparatively very slow. The Spaniards and Turks furnish respectively striking examples of these two modes of operation.

The Spaniards and Turks were remarkable, the former for possessing some of the best infantry, the

latter some of the best cavalry ever known. And it may be observed that a rough and mountainous country like Spain appears to be favourable for the production of good infantry, while a country like Turkey, abounding in extensive plains, appears to afford superior facilities for the production of good cavalry. We see the same thing on a smaller scale in the Highlands of Scotland and the broad and rich plains of Yorkshire. The Spanish infantry formed an important part of the army of Hannibal; though it was perhaps his Numidian horse in which his superiority to the Romans was of most advantage to him. And in later times, when Spain was at its height of power, the position which she held was in great part owing to the excellence of the Spanish infantry. For the unrivalled excellence of the Turkish cavalry, even down to the commencement of the present century, we have good authority. Whence comes it that these two nations have lost their strength?

I have said that the primary element of a nation's strength consists in the physical strength and hardihood, combined with the courage and patriotism, of its people. Now, an important distinction is to be noted here. In the case of Athens, where the native population chiefly consisted of people living in the town of Athens; and in that of Rome, where in later times the land of Italy was cultivated almost entirely by slaves, and the Roman free citizens consisted principally of persons living in Rome, and passing their

time in idleness and luxury, in listening to orators, and witnessing dramatic performances and gladiatorial shows; the people (though, in the case of the Romans, the gladiatorial shows might make them familiar with blood and cruelty) were physically as well as morally effeminate. But, in regard to Spain and Turkey, this physical degeneracy does not exist. The Spanish peasantry are as strong and stalwart men as when they formed the most formidable infantry, and the Turkish peasantry as stalwart men and as good horsemen as when they formed the most formidable cavalry, of the world.

In answer to the question, Whence comes this degeneracy? it would be easy to give the short answer, From a bad government. But in the case of Turkey, this would hardly seem to afford a completely satisfactory solution of the problem. For who shall tell the time when the Turkish government was a good, or even was not a bad government? that is, if by a good government is meant a government which has any regard to justice in its dealings either with its own subjects or with foreign nations, as long as its very existence does not demand a compliance with the general diplomatic forms of Europe.

Like Athens and Rome, Spain and Turkey, when at the height of their strength, aimed at universal plunder and universal dominion. Whenever this is the principle of a government, the experience of all history shows that the days of that government are

numbered. The Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Carthaginians, the Romans, the Moguls, have all in their turns united the strength and courage with the morality of a strong band of robbers; and they have all perished. It would seem as if the practice of fraud, falsehood, and injustice on a gigantic scale, ate like a mortal disease into their vitals, corrupting the springs of all healthy strength and vitality. What nation was safe from the rapacious cruelty of the Turk and the Spaniard in the day of their power? And Europe has felt for ages, and feels at this hour, the consequences of the ambition of those princes of the House of Austria, who, having robbed the Spaniards of their liberties, employed the strength which those liberties had nourished to destroy the last relics of the liberties of Italy. There is a law observable in the life of nations, that the great crimes committed by them, though they may seem for a time to be very pleasant and profitable, recoil at last upon the heads of their authors, and become their own punishment; their plunder acting in a way somewhat similar to that in which Machiavelli's present of wine acted on his butcher.

Machiavelli's servant complained to him one day that his butcher had been very insolent, adding that he had not confined his abusive language to him (the servant), but had also spoken very disrespectfully of his master. Machiavelli made no remark, but

ordered the servant to look out half a dozen of the best and choicest wine in his cellar, to take it to the butcher, and beg his acceptance of it as a small present from his master. The servant was surprised, but did as he was ordered. A short time after, he came and informed Machiavelli that the butcher had been stabbed and killed on the spot by a man whom he had insulted. Machiavelli smiled, and said:—"You see that present of mine acted like poison upon him. Instead of repressing his violent temper, and correcting his ill manners, as he might have done if I had resented his insolence at the time, he has gone on from bad to worse, till he has at last met with the proper punishment."

In the case of Spain, besides that universal dissolution of all morality which is the inevitable consequence of a system of universal conquest and plunder, and which was common to her with Rome and Turkey, there was another point of coincidence with Rome, though not with Turkey. Spain, like Rome, had once possessed institutions comparatively good, which gave her a certain amount of health, strength, and energy as a nation. These institutions the first princes of the House of Austria—Charles V., his minister, Cardinal Ximenes, and his son, Philip II., who were to Spain what the Cæsars were to Rome,—almost entirely destroyed. The difference between the empire which Philip II. inherited from his father, and the empire which he left to his successors, is a

true measure of the effect of the work of these profound politicians, who deemed themselves able not merely to overreach and subjugate man, but to circumvent God. They received, at their accession to power, a nation which, from its valour, its intelligence, and its energy, seemed able to conquer all the world. By first destroying the institutions which had produced that valour, that energy, and that intelligence, and then extending their work of corruption and degradation, by *seeking* to conquer all the world, they left to after ages the same nation in such a state of decrepitude and decay, that but for its extent of territory, and the compact and naturally defensive form of that territory, Spain would have been blotted from among the nations of the earth, as Athens and Carthage and Rome had been blotted from the roll of nations. Such appears to be the retribution decreed by the eternal laws of the Omnipotent, as the punishment for the lust of unjust dominion, and for all the robbery, cruelty, and oppression perpetrated in the pursuit of that dominion.

I have mentioned, in the preceding chapter, as some measure of the decline of a nation's strength, the immense sums laid out upon houses and palaces. That cruel tyrant and savage bigot, Philip II., is said to have laid out upon the Escorial, the largest palace in Europe, about three millions sterling.

No change took place in the form of the govern-

ment of the Turks similar to that which took place in the form of the government of the Spaniards, by the abolition of the free constitutional assembly, called the Cortes, to account for the decline of their military strength. From the first, the government of Turkey was a pure military despotism. The Sultan ruled with the same absolute power as the general of an army; considering all his subjects as slaves, whose lives and properties were at his disposal. As there were, consequently, no principles in the constitution of the Turkish government to act as checks upon misgovernment, or as preservatives or restoratives of its original strength (for it possessed originally the strength and energy which belong to an energetic military despotism), the wonder is not that it should in time fall into decrepitude, but that it should continue vigorous so long as it did. Lord Bacon, who views the subject without reference to the form or goodness of the government, attributes the power and greatness which the Turks, as well as some other nations, possessed for a time, to their making the profession of arms their principal honour, study, and occupation. And he adds, "that it is a most certain oracle of time, that those States that continue long in that profession (as the Romans and Turks principally have done) do wonders; and those that have professed arms but for an age have, notwithstanding, commonly attained that greatness in that age, which

maintained them long after, when their profession and exercise of arms hath grown to decay.”* Bacon also considers it as an advantage possessed by the Turks that they never were without a specious ground or pretext for quarrels and wars, whereby their military qualities might be kept in constant exercise. “The Turk,” he says, “hath at hand, for cause of war, the propagation of his law or sect—a quarrel that he may always command.”

Notwithstanding, however, all these advantages, the strength of the Turkish system began after a time to exhibit unequivocal symptoms of decline. The Essay of Lord Bacon above quoted was written nearly three hundred years ago, and yet he there says of that greatness, which is the consequence of military strength—“the Turks have it at this day, though in great declination.” Bacon’s statement is in accordance with the facts. The principal causes assigned for the decline of the Turkish power were the habit contracted by Suleïman I., towards the end of his days (he died in 1566), of no longer presiding in person at the divan, the promotion of his favourites to the first dignities of the State, the influence of the harem in public affairs, and the immense power and wealth of the grand vizirs.† More than a century after this, however, the Turks threatened all Europe; but they never altogether recovered from the defeats

* *Essay on the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates.*

† *Turquie*, par Jouannin et Van Gaver, p. 155. Paris, 1853.

they received, first, from John Sobieski, under the walls of Vienna, in 1683, and thirty-three years later, from Eugene, at Peterwardein. The strength of their position still protected them from total destruction; and in their case the world was enabled to see of what quality are the dregs of a military despotism suffered to run out its full course. For a time the head of a military despotism must possess some of the qualities, such as courage, hardihood, and sagacity, which raised the first man—of whom he is the representative—to his post. But when conquest has procured wealth and the means of luxury, and time has given a certain degree of stability to the dominion at first conquered and held by valour, unremitted toil, and peril, the head of a military despotism no longer possesses either the qualities of a general or a statesman, of a hardy soldier or a constitutional king. He becomes an effeminate sensualist, who rules his empire and commands his armies through the ministers of his pleasures, and the whole machine of his government becomes one mass of imbecility, rottenness, and corruption. Thus the strength of the Turks lasted as long as the Sultan was a man of energy, who devoted his time to labour and not to pleasure, and while, as a consequence of this devotion to the duties of his place, he gave all the highest posts under him to the greatest military merit. But even when Montecuculi wrote, this mortal disease had com-

menced in the Turkish government. After speaking of the valour of the Turkish troops and of the experience and military qualities of their officers, he adds that corruption has already appeared among them : men totally unfit being raised at once to the command of armies. The source of this abuse, he continues, is that the Sultan, plunged in sensuality, and neglecting the observance of the Mahometan laws, never goes to war in person.* The history of Rome under the empire, and the whole history of Asia, exhibit the same result, and demonstrate by unmistakeable signs the goal to which all military monarchies are drifting; though the history of the Turks shows that they may take ages to reach that goal. This explains why the Turks of the present day, though they may be as stalwart men and as good horsemen as the Spahis, who were once so formidable, make so poor a military figure; all their officers above the rank of captain being appointed, not for their military qualities, but for having been “a Pasha’s pipe-bearer or something worse.”† The men have no confidence in them; and if they had, their confidence would be much misplaced.

* *Mémoires de Montecuculi, généralissime des troupes de l'Empereur*, p. 245. Paris, 1760.

† These words are quoted from a valuable and interesting sketch of the present state of the Turkish military system by an eye-witness—an English officer—in a Paper entitled “The Turks in Kalafat, 1854,” in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, for March and April, 1859.

The magnitude of the power of the Turks at the time they took Constantinople in 1453, and for more than a century after, is attested by the fact that in England two or three centuries ago, histories of the Turks engaged as much attention as histories of the Romans. And though, according to the remark of Bacon above quoted, the decline of their strength had begun towards the end of the sixteenth century, their power was still very formidable during the whole at least of the seventeenth century. This is proved by the fact that Montecuculi, generalissimo of the troops of the Emperor, has devoted two-thirds of his celebrated Military Memoirs to the subject of the military strength and mode of warfare of the Turks. The whole of his second book is devoted to the subject of "war against the Turk;" and his third book to an account of his own campaigns against the Turks in the four years from 1661 to 1664, in which last year he gave the Turks a signal defeat at St. Gothard, with the loss to them of more than 16,000 men, the best of both their infantry and cavalry.

A nation, particularly a rich nation, which should imagine that it could enjoy peace without strong means of self-defence against a neighbouring nation at once powerful and ambitious—whether such neighbouring nation be a military monarchy, a military oligarchy, or a military democracy—would be in the condition of a householder who trusted to the goodwill of the surrounding thieves, instead of trusting

to an efficient police for protection. In either case it is crying "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace.

This was eminently the case with all nations who were within reach either of the Spaniard or of the Turk in the day of his strength, his religion, and his cruelty. With the Turk there could be no true peace; it was necessary either to destroy him, or be destroyed.* In him was remarkably exemplified the effect of cultivating no art but that of war, of being always armed to the teeth and ready for quarrel, and for occasions of war and conquest. For of the Turk, as of the Roman, it may be said, that he challenged all the world. "His shield always hung in the lists:" though most unlike that of the chivalrous ideal was the object for which the Turk, like the Roman, was always ready to fight. "Le Turc," is the remarkable expression of Montecuculi, "dévore dans son cœur la monarchie du monde; et il n'est pas disposé à se donner du repos, ni à en laisser prendre aux autres, qu'il n'ait éprouvé ses forces contre eux."†

Montecuculi mentions‡ a certain Austrian prime minister, on whose brain the imagination of peace was so strongly imprinted, that he actually, after the experience of so many ages, allowed himself to be duped by the Turk's professions of peace, when the latter was only preparing to make war with more

* *Mémoires de Montecuculi*, p. 222.

† *Ibid.* p. 409.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 410.

irresistible force. And in this respect the Turk possessed the usual political qualities of all large robbers. Sometimes he spread false rumours as to his designs, in order to take by surprise the nation he was about to attack ; sometimes he published his real design, in order to deceive by the truth itself.* It has been the same from the beginning of time, and will be to the end ; or until that millennium which some modern politicians appear vainly to imagine has already commenced. Thus Philip of Macedon, with solemn professions of friendship, interfered in the affairs of Greece ; and with solemn professions of friendship, erased Greece from the list of nations. Thus Rome with solemn professions of friendship entered Spain, and with solemn professions of friendship reduced it to a province. In the same manner Rome enslaved Sicily, Illyria, and every kingdom which placed any trust in her. “Her enmity was dangerous, but her friendship was fatal. None ever escaped with honour from that deadly embrace.”

What was true of ancient days, is as true of modern. At the beginning of this century, France, by solemn professions, unwisely trusted in, obtained the neutrality of Prussia, while she subjugated nation after nation identified with Prussia by the closest common interests. At last, when all obstacles to universal empire had been crushed one after another, the duped ally perceived her error, had recourse to arms, was

* *Mémoires*, p. 288.

defeated, and was then plainly told that the ruler of France despised her for her credulity, and had always intended to punish her for having defeated the French at Rosbach. If Prussia was to be overrun, outraged, and plundered for the one field of Rosbach, what may they expect, who presumed to win the fields of Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, and Waterloo? They must rely upon their own strength and their own valour. When these have departed, their wealth will become the spoil, and themselves, their wives and children, the subjects of the invader.

Montecuculi describes the Turks of his time as brave, obedient, and sober.* Their bravery was the effect of health and strength, good food and good clothing, unremitted attention from their earliest years to military exercises, and consequent skill and dexterity in the use of their arms and the management of their horses. To these were added a fierce fanaticism, and the belief in an inevitable fatality. Their discipline was the effect of the hope of very high rewards, and the fear of very severe punishments. The same principle that brought forward so much military talent from the lower ranks of the people under the English Long Parliament and the French Convention, and under Cromwell and Napoleon, was constantly at work among the Turks, for two or three centuries. There was no class or caste

* *Mémoires*, p. 260, *et seq.*

claiming an exclusive monopoly of military rank as their birthright. The lowest Turk could rise to the highest post in the empire, next to the Sultan; and so long as the lowest soldier could hope to rise by skill and valour to the command of armies, the Turkish power was of necessity formidable. As to their temperance, the Turks drank nothing but water, and ate nothing but rice and mutton, and that only once a day. Thus, not overloading their stomachs with an excess of food, nor destroying them with exciting and poisonous drink, and undergoing much fatigue, they were healthy and robust. The Turk thus possessed the first element of military strength. Added to this was a quality which forms another element of strength, when not carried to a stupid excess. The Turk had a strong spirit of nationality, and contempt for all other nations. This spirit of nationality, with the accompanying contempt for all other nations, which has been more or less common to all conquering nations, tribes, or hordes, was carried to an extraordinary height by the fanatical followers of Mahomet. "God curse these dogs," said the illiterate Arab of his Greek captives, "what a strange, barbarous language they speak!" In a similar spirit is the Turks' opinion of themselves as opposed to the Christians, which may be found amusingly set forth in a French translation of a Turkish book on military tactics, wherein the author describes the Christians as little better than sheep,

when they can once be broken in upon, but says that their diabolical tactical ingenuity is such that they have, incredible as it may seem, actually beaten *us*! This last admission, however, even with the qualification annexed, evinces a considerable degree of candour on the part of the Turk who wrote the book referred to.

But I am inclined to think that the main element of the strength of the Turkish government for several centuries, was the same which formed the strength of England for a still longer period, namely, the system of military tenures.

The Turkish cavalry—the Spahis—were maintained on very much the same footing as the men-at-arms of the Plantagenets. In the time of Sultan Murad I., the contemporary of our Richard II., military fiefs were established in favour of the Spahis, who, when not engaged in war, resided on their fiefs; and, during war, were bound to furnish one cuirassier for every three thousand aspres of revenue. And the holder of the fief was bound not only to find men in proportion to his revenue, but to serve himself. Every fief which produced less than twenty thousand aspres was called *timar*; a fief producing more than that sum received the name of *ziamet*. These fiefs were hereditary; and on failure of male descendants able to perform military service, reverted to the State. The pacha of the province then gave them to another Sipah, or old soldier. In the time of Suleiman I.,

the contemporary of our Henry VIII., the ziamet and the timar furnished 200,000 men. But after the death (A.D. 1566) of that great prince, the regulations of Murad fell into abeyance, and the feudatories no longer made their appearance with their proper contingent of men. In 1776, Sultan Abdul Hamid published a severe edict for the reorganization of the Spahis; but the clamours of the fiefholders frightened the government, which abandoned its plans of reform, and accepted a contribution of fifty piastres for each man-at-arms required by the law.*

The Turkish infantry—the Janissaries—were permanently embodied: they appear in their manner of fighting to have somewhat resembled the Scottish Highlanders; their custom being, after firing their muskets, to draw their sabres, and rush upon the enemy.†

Montecuculi bears testimony to the desperate bravery of the Turks. He says he has repeatedly seen them swim rivers in the face of an enemy, with their sabres between their teeth.‡

The chief strength of the Turk lay in his use of the “*arme blanche*,” which, with his infantry as well as cavalry, was the sabre.

What may be the effect of the recent improve-

* *Turquie*, par M. J. M. Jouannin, premier secrétaire interprète du roi pour les langues orientales, et par M. Jules Van Gaver, p. 35. Paris, 1853.

† *Mémoires de Montecuculi*, p. 258.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 261.

ments in fire-arms, both in respect to longer range and greater precision, time will show ; but it appears certain that hitherto the effect of the invention of fire-arms upon war has been greatly exaggerated and misunderstood. For example, Adam Smith says :—
“ In modern war, the great expense of fire-arms gives an evident advantage to the nation which can best afford that expense ; and, consequently, to an opulent and civilized over a poor and barbarous nation.”*

This assertion is disproved by what the Highlanders accomplished in the seventeenth century under the Marquis of Montrose, and in the Rebellion of 1745, and by the whole history of the Turks for 200 years after the introduction of fire-arms. The Highlanders did their work principally with the broadsword, and the Turks with the sabre ; and the result sufficiently showed the unsoundness of the conclusion, that making a noise by the explosion of gunpowder would form an efficient substitute for the neglect of the cultivation of the qualities of bodily strength and activity, and skill and dexterity in the use of arms. It is no answer to this to say that Cromwell's troops ultimately beating the Highlanders is in favour of fire-arms ; for Cromwell did nearly all his work by the superior excellence of his cavalry and the bodily strength and enthusiastic spirit of his pikemen. More of the work, too, both of Cromwell and Gustavus Adolphus, was done by the butt than by the muzzle

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i. part i., *sub fin.*

of the musket, the bayonet not being rendered effective till long after. It might be shown also that Frederick II. of Prussia owed much of his success to the excellence of his cavalry, commanded as they were by the best cavalry officer in the world, Seidelitz. Where the Turks were weak was where, as has been shown, the Spartans were weak—in their cultivation of bodily strength to the total exclusion of intellectual power. With them, as with the Spartans, this rendered it impossible, or next to impossible, to possess a first-rate general. Consequently, the Spartans and the Turks, though they might, from their excellence as soldiers, be almost sure of defeating troops of inferior excellence led by ordinary generals, when they came to contend with the strategical genius of such commanders as Epaminondas and Eugene, were defeated; the great superiority of the general making up for the inferiority of his army.

Marshal Saxe's theory (which, however, must have been much modified if the rifle had then been in use) is that musketry is of very little service, unless at such close quarters as to be pretty nearly equivalent to the use of the "arme blanche." He speaks of "l'abus de la tirerie, qui fait plus de bruit que de mal, et qui fait toujours battre ceux qui s'en servent."* He says, further, "La poudre n'est pas si terrible qu'on le croit. Peu de gens dans les affaires sont tués de bonne

* *Mémoires sur l'Art de la Guerre*, de Maurice Comte de Saxe, p. 44. Dresden, 1757.

guerre et par devant ; j'ai vu des salves entières ne pas tuer quatre hommes, et je n'en ai jamais vu, ni personne, je pense, qui ait causé un dommage assez considérable pour empêcher d'aller en avant, et de s'en venger à grands coups de bayonettes et de fusils tirés à brûle-pourpoint. C'est là où il se tue du monde, et c'est le victorieux qui tue."*

Marshal Saxe supports his theory by various facts ; one of which was, the total and rapid destruction of two battalions of German infantry by a body of Turks : cavalry, it would seem ; though that point is not quite clear in the Marshal's account ; but, either way, the sabre was the weapon of destruction. He thus describes the action :—

“ At the battle of Belgrade I saw two battalions cut in pieces in an instant : it happened thus. Two battalions, one of Lorraine, and one of Neuperg, were on a height which we called the battery ; and at the moment when a blast of wind dispersed a fog which prevented us from distinguishing anything, I saw these troops on the crest of the height separated from the rest of our army. Prince Eugene asked me if I had a good sight ; and what was that troop of horsemen which was making the circuit of the mountain. I replied, that it was thirty or forty Turks. He said to me,—‘ Those men are destroyed,’ meaning the two battalions. I did not, however, see that they

* *Mémoires sur l'Art de la Guerre*, de Maurice Comte de Saxe, p. 46.

were attacked, or were likely to be, because I could not see what was on the other side of the mountain. I proceeded thither as fast as I could. At the moment I arrived behind the colours of Neuperg, I saw the two battalions present arms, take aim, and fire a general volley at thirty paces on a body of Turks who were advancing upon them. The fire and the mêlée were simultaneous; and the two battalions had no time for flight; for they were all instantly sabred on the spot where they stood. There escaped only M. de Neuperg, who, luckily for him, was on horse-back; an ensign, with his colours, who threw himself on my horse's mane, and hampered me very much; together with two or three soldiers. At this moment Prince Eugene rode up almost alone; that is to say, with only his staff; and the Turks retired, I don't know why. It was there that he received a shot through the sleeve. Some troops of cavalry and some infantry now came up, and M. de Neuperg asked for a detachment to secure the clothes. Sentinels were posted on the ground occupied by those dead battalions; and piles of coats, hats, shoes, &c. were collected. While this was going on, I amused myself with counting the dead, and I found only thirty-two Turks killed by the volley of those two battalions; which has not raised my opinion of the value of fire-arms."*

* *Mémoires sur l'Art de la Guerre*, de Maurice Comte de Saxe. Article Sixième, pp. 47, 48, 49, 50. Dresden, 1757.

There is a passage in the *Mémoires du Prince Eugène*, which, whether or not the reputed author of that work, the Prince de Ligne, possessed accurate knowledge of Prince Eugene or his opinions, may at least serve to show the opinion entertained in Europe during the last century of the military value of those qualities which belong to soldiers who retain some of the habits of savage life. The French government may have on this principle organized the corps called "Turcos." Another measure of the French government in the same direction is the adoption of the *sword-bayonet*. The French government has also, it is said, borrowed the *more open* line from our Highlanders, and has evinced its wisdom by organizing such a corps and adopting such improvements. The English government, on the contrary, has evinced the reverse of wisdom, by permitting the depopulation of the Highlands of Scotland, and thereby expelling many thousands of men, who, by their brave and patriotic spirit, their strength and activity of body, their power of enduring hardship, fatigue, and privation, their skill and dexterity in the use of their weapons, their rapid mode of attack, accompanied by wild and savage war cries, like those of the Turks, would have been in the long run rather more valuable to the British nation than either the sheep or the red deer which have supplanted them. Of this depopulation I will speak in a subsequent chapter. In the meantime, I give

here the passage from the *Mémoires du Prince Eugène*.

“Si un Bacha, un renégat, un général des alliés de la Porte, mettait des pelotons à leur façon en seconde ligne dans les intervalles de la première, et d’autres en troisième dans ceux de la deuxième, et puis encore des réserves et leurs Spahis sur les ailes ; avec leurs maudits ‘Allah ! Allah !’ en hurlemens, et leur manière d’avancer avec cinquante hommes et un petit drapeau, ils seraient invincibles.” *

Even at the commencement of the present century the Turkish cavalry had not altogether lost its once formidable character. And this would seem to indicate that a considerable portion of the Turkish military strength still survived during the first quarter of the present century. I am inclined to think that the destruction of the Janissaries has something to do with the present state of weakness of the Turkish empire. The main cause of the destruction of the Janissaries is generally understood to have been the dread entertained of them by the Sultans, as being a sort of check—a rough and clumsy one indeed, but, nevertheless, very effective in its way—upon their own misgovernment. It may be true that the Janissaries had greatly degenerated from

* *Mémoires du Prince Eugène de Savoie*, écrites par lui-même. Seconde réimpression conforme à l’édition de Weymar (1809), à Londres, 1811, pp. 120, 121.

their former discipline and valour. Still they remained as a sort of visible impersonation both of the fanatical and the military spirit which had formed the source of the Turkish strength. The fanatical intolerance may still remain; as indeed is witnessed by the very ordinance of 1826, for the formation of a new body of troops in accordance with the modern usages of other nations, which quotes from the Koran these words—"Employ every means in your power to conquer the infidels."

But the Turk, though he may be still as stupid and cruel a bigot as ever, has lost his old confidence in his bigotry as a principle of action, and has got no new principle of action in the place of it. And, with the fall of the Janissaries, all check on the misgovernment of the Sultans is now removed. The consequence is, that they can now go on reveling in the earthly dream of their Prophet's heaven without the danger of that dream being broken by the sabres of their own Janissaries. But in this world it is not given to any man, or beast, to reckon on undisturbed sensual enjoyment. The hog is rudely shaken out of his dream of pleasure by the butcher's knife. An end, not very dissimilar, overtook Nero and Heliogabalus, and has been the customary fate of despots innumerable, in all parts of the world where despots have a taste for the life of hogs. Indeed such habits must be regarded as

dangerous indulgences anywhere, whether those men who pursue them are princes or private men.

The Sultan, therefore, though now freed from the fear of his Janissaries' sabres, is occasionally disturbed by visions of Russian bayonets. From these he was delivered not long ago by England and France, at no small cost to themselves. This might, perhaps, have the effect of enabling the Sultan to enjoy himself in quiet for a long time to come, provided that England and France can always be reckoned on to join against Russia. But suppose that France should join Russia instead of joining England, England would then have rather a tough job in hand, not only to defend herself, but to defend Turkey against Russia and France united. Under these circumstances, if the Spahis cannot be reorganized in their pristine strength, it would seem very desirable both for England and Turkey to re-establish the Janissaries, or some other equally effective check or control upon the imbecility and vices of the Turkish government; a check of that kind being the only *constitutional* check which the Turkish government, like almost all the Asiatic governments, of the nature of which it partakes largely, would appear to admit of.

Both the Spaniards and the Turks furnish remarkable examples of a principle which is found in a greater or less degree in operation among all nations

—the principle of regarding all other nations as inferior, and distinguishing them by an epithet more or less opprobrious. With the Greeks and Romans all foreign nations were distinguished by a word which, though originally meaning only foreigners, came to have a stronger signification—barbarians. This word, though it might involve that idea, did not adopt for the leading idea it was meant to convey a different religious worship. But with the Arabs, the Turks, and the Spaniards, the religious idea was the predominant one in the term which they bestowed on other nations. With the Arabs, most foreigners were Kaffirs; with the Turks, Giaours; and with the Spaniards, Heretics. Kaffirs, Giaours, and Heretics were wretches; to conquer, rob, and slaughter whom was not only a meritorious deed on earth, but a passport to eternal happiness in heaven.

With nations such as these, when they set up the trade of conquerors, there evidently would be no middle course. Their mission on earth being, as the chosen people of the true God, to spread the knowledge and worship of their true God by fire and sword, they must either destroy or be destroyed. The Arabs have lost their place among the nations. The Turks and the Spaniards still hold a nominal place; but a place so fallen from that they once held in the height of their power and of their savage and fanatical arrogance, that they may serve as a warn-

ing to after ages of the vengeance of the Omnipotent on the mingled folly and wickedness of men who presumed to perpetrate, in the name of God, deeds of cruelty and rapine worthy of the most ferocious beasts of prey.

CHAPTER VI.

CIVILIZATION AND CONQUEST.—HERO-WORSHIP
AND DEVIL-WORSHIP.

WHETHER or not it be true, according to the remark of David Hume, that the world is yet too young to have a political philosophy, it is certainly yet too young to be able to boast of having civilization, in any high and extended sense of that term. Even in those communities which reckon themselves the most civilized in the world, we find that the old saying, "*homo homini lupus*" (man is a wolf to man), still holds true. For, though cruelty is not there found in the shape of that callousness to physical human suffering which we find in the actions of the Greeks and Romans and of our own ancestors, it is abundantly found in the copious use of falsehood as the means to self-aggrandizement, the triumph of political factions, and the consequent defeat of personal and political adversaries. As such defeat, thus brought about by means which a strictly humane and honourable man cannot employ,

may, and often does, reduce the opposite party to ruin and beggary, it proves the existence of an amount of cruelty showing that man is still a wolf to man, and disproves the existence of civilization, in its highest sense.

But whatever difference of opinion there may be on this point, the problem is one of which I shall not now attempt the solution. The progress of society—or, at least, of that portion of the world which calls itself civilized society—has long been, and still is, towards the use of truth and the disuse of falsehood; though, to judge from the grand results, falsehood is still considerably the stronger and more prosperous power of the two. Still the world is advancing. The quaint remark of an old writer—I think it was Sir Walter Raleigh—that “a man might follow truth so near the heels, that it might at last dash out his teeth,” is not quite so extensively true now as it was two centuries and a half ago. And though following truth very near the heels is still not altogether free from peril, the chances are rather more in favour of the truth-seeker’s teeth, and head too, than they were in the days of the Tudors and the Stuarts.

But there is another problem having reference to civilization, of which, at the present time, it may be useful to attempt the solution. And that question is, whether civilization can, to any considerable extent, be the result of conquest?

Some of the most extensive conquests in the history of the world have been made by nations of shepherds, which are much more formidable than nations of hunters or nations of husbandmen. An army of hunters, as Adam Smith has observed, and as we have seen exemplified in the case of the North American Indians, “can seldom exceed two or three hundred men. The precarious subsistence which the chase affords could seldom allow a greater number to keep together for any considerable time. An army of shepherds, on the contrary, may sometimes amount to two or three hundred thousand. . . . A nation of hunters can never be formidable to the civilized nations in their neighbourhood; a nation of shepherds may. Nothing can be more contemptible than an Indian war in North America; nothing, on the contrary, can be more dreadful than a Tartar invasion has frequently been in Asia.”

Adam Smith then proceeds to observe that the judgment of Thucydides,* that no nation, either of Europe or Asia, could resist the Scythians united, has been verified by the experience of all ages. “The inhabitants,” he adds, “of the extensive but defenceless plains of Scythia and Tartary, have been

* Adam Smith appears not to quote Thucydides quite correctly here. His words are, “The judgment of Thucydides that both Europe and Asia could not resist the Scythians united;” whereas, the words of Thucydides are—*ταύτη δὲ ἀδύνατα ἐξισοῦσθαι οὐχ ὅτι τὰ ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ, ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ ἔθνος ἔν πρὸς ἔν οὐκ ἔστιν ὃ, τι δυνατόν Σκύθαις ὁμογνωμονοῦσι πᾶσιν ἀντιστῆναι.*—Thuc. ii. 97.

frequently united under the dominion of the chief of some conquering horde or clan; and the havoc and devastation of Asia have always signalized their union. The inhabitants of the inhospitable deserts of Arabia, the other great nation of shepherds, have never been united but once—under Mahomet and his immediate successors. Their union, which was more the effort of religious enthusiasm than of conquest, was signalized in the same manner.”

It will hardly be contended that civilization has been in any degree advanced by the conquests either of the Scythian or Arab nations of shepherds. In those cases, as the conquering nations were in a low state of civilization themselves—even on the assumption that the conquered should acquire the civilization of the conquerors—such acquisition could not amount to much. But the result might, perhaps, be expected to be different in those cases where the conquerors possessed a considerable degree of civilization—at least, as compared with the condition of the natives they conquered.

Let us take the case of the greatest nation, viewed as a nation extending its dominion by conquest, which has appeared in the history of the world, and endeavour to learn what were the effects of that spirit of conquest upon the civilization of themselves and those they conquered. With the Romans, at least in the later stages of their history, patriotism

meant the extension of their empire. This was their sole standard of morality. They had no notion of any higher duty to God and his eternal laws of justice, mercy, and beneficence. This observation applies even to those Romans whose standard of morality was highest. Thus Tacitus,* describing the massacre of the Marsi by Germanicus, says: "The country for fifty miles was wasted with fire and sword. Neither age nor sex was spared." And yet he extols the clemency of Germanicus, in the parallel between him and Alexander. And,† as if it were a fine stroke of statesmanship, he describes the policy of Agricola in Britain as directed to teach the Britons far worse vices than those of their former savage life. These were men of distinguished ancient virtue. Again, Tacitus‡ thus describes the slaughter in the victory gained by Suetonius Paulinus over the Britons under Boadicea: "The soldiers did not abstain from the slaughter of the women. The cattle

* *Ann.* i. 51.

† *Agric.* 21.

‡ *Ann.* xiv. 37. The Athenian principles of public morals were precisely the same. The argument put by Thucydides into the mouth of Euphemus, ἀνδρὶ δὲ τυράννῳ, ἥ πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ, οὐδὲν ἄλογον, δ, τι ξυμφέρων (*Thuc.* vi. 85),—and of the Athenian ambassadors to the Melians:—ἡγοῦμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ, τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διαπαντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας, οὗ ἂν κρατῇ, ἀρχεῖν (*Thuc.* v. 105),—is in accordance with the whole of at least their later history. Adam Smith concludes that the morals of the Romans, both in public and private life, were, upon the whole, superior to those of the Greeks. But without going into minute distinctions, it may be concluded that both were bad.

added to the heaps of slain. The glory of the day was equal to the most splendid victories of ancient times." "According to some writers, not less than eighty thousand Britons," including, it may be inferred, women and children, "were put to the sword." Again, Tacitus* describes their treatment of their subjects in language that cannot be translated. Vitellius ordered new levies to be made, and the youth of Batavia were to be called out. By the avarice and profligacy of the Roman officers, the aged and infirm were pressed into the service, in order to extort from them large sums for their dismissal; and boys of tender years, but advanced in their growth (as was generally the case in that country), *ad stuprum trahebantur*.

Far as some of the modern imitators of these oppressors and corrupters of the ancient world have gone, none have come quite up to their model; which, in the later stages, presented such a fermentation of vice and crime; of cruelty, sensuality, and unnatural passions; of universal dissolution of all the ties of humanity, morality, and religion, as the world has surely never elsewhere seen. The effect of the Roman policy in thoroughly brutalizing the Roman populace, and, indeed, the whole people, is described by Tacitus.† In the conflict in the streets of Rome between the soldiers of Vitellius and Vespasian, the

* *Hist.* iv. 14.

† *Ibid.* iii. 83.

populace cheered the combatants with shouts and theatrical applause. If the men fled from their ranks and took shelter in shops or houses, they roared to have them dragged forth and put to death, like gladiators, for their diversion. While the soldiers were intent on slaughter, they were employed in plundering. Truly, such a people deserved all the sufferings they endured from their tyrants—instruments of the vengeance of Heaven—when the spirit of cruelty and brutality which those oppressors and robbers of the ancient world had so long exercised in other nations was turned against themselves. On this occasion Rome presented a medley of savage slaughter and monstrous vice: in one place, war and desolation; in another, bathing, riot, and debauchery.

Even without any sympathy for the general success of Carthage, it is difficult, in reading the campaigns of Hannibal, to suppress a wish that the great Carthaginian—the “*nostris ex ossibus ultor*” of Dido’s dying imprecation—had not only pursued the self-styled descendants of Virgil’s base pseudo-hero with fire and sword, but had completed his work by utterly extirpating that nest of immoderate and sanguinary robbers. But the fates ordered otherwise; and the unequalled warrior whom all the Roman armies could never conquer in Italy, was forced to succumb to that fortune before which all things

human were for a time doomed to yield; and a dose of poison became "*Cannarum vindex et tanti sanguinis ultor.*"*

In examining the arguments which have sometimes been advanced on behalf of conquests and conquerors, namely, that they are instruments of civilization, it will be proper to bear in mind that the irruption of the barbarians on the Roman empire does not fall under the signification of conquest here used. I speak not of a body of men, whether in a more or less savage state, seeking a new settlement, but of the chief or chiefs of a nation already in possession of a sufficient territory, seeking to extend their dominion over the territory already belonging to others. In regard to the argument referred to, I think it will be found, on examination, that the civilization produced by conquest is a very false, hollow, and unsound civilization; that it goes little, if at all, below the surface, and possesses little or nothing of the true nerve and sinews, heart and brain, of real civilization, which must develop itself naturally, and gradually, and healthily

* It may be remarked, as an example of the way in which the later Roman writers showed themselves the mock-birds of Virgil's song, that Juvenal, struck, no doubt, with the swelling sound of Virgil's line—

“*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*”—

attempted to copy its beauty and harmony when he calls the ring containing the poison which destroyed Hannibal—

“*Cannarum vindex ac tanti sanguinis ultor.*”

from within, not be forcibly impressed and forced on from without.

This is apparent from the so-called civilization introduced by the Romans among the nations they conquered, which fell to pieces, like a fabric of snow or sand, when the Roman power fell, being quite unable to withstand the attacks of the invading barbarians. And we may ask, too, what civilization the Franks introduced into Gaul, or the Normans into Italy, England, and Ireland. If civilization has been, or is to be, the result in these cases, it is not as a proximate, or even ultimate, consequence of conquest; but as a consequence of certain violent conflicts, struggles, or fermentations, which followed not in accordance with, but in reaction of, such conquest. In England, the advance made in rational and healthy free institutions above all the nations of the world is attributable, in great part, to what at first sight seemed likely to have a contrary effect. Certain circumstances in an event, the conquest by the Normans, which at first seemed and was a very deplorable one, made the earlier Anglo-Norman kings the most powerful kings of their time, but also raised up a resistance to them, so powerful as to make the English kings subsequently have a limited authority, when the other European kings held an unlimited or absolute authority. It would be very fallacious reasoning, however, to set this up as an argument in favour of conquest; and very unsafe to

trust to such experiments, if the object sought after were human happiness and prosperity, not human misery and degradation.

Admitting that a certain consolidation of tribes or populations is favourable, perhaps necessary, to the progress of civilization, it seems of the first importance that such consolidation should be the effect of mutual consent and agreement; as in the case of the union of the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy, of England and Scotland, of the United Provinces of Holland, and of the United States of America: not of violence and conquest, as in the case of Rome and her various provinces and *municipia*, of France and some of her southern provinces, of Prussia and Silesia, of Russia, Prussia, and Austria with various parts of Poland, and, to mention a recent and very melancholy instance, of Austria and Hungary. This distinction I conceive to be one of paramount importance, and it is co-extensive with one which, in the present day, when a good deal is said about hero-worship, is also of no small importance: the distinction, namely, between heroes and conquerors—a distinction which leads necessarily to another, that grows up beside it, the distinction between God-worship and devil-worship.

Whatever amount of good may occasionally and indirectly grow up out of the doings of conquerors, I hold it to be a truth that all conquerors, *quâ* conquerors, are to be viewed as the mortal enemies of the human race, and as such are to be

hunted down and extirpated, as the wolves were hunted down and extirpated in England and other somewhat civilized countries.* It is true that this opinion, even though it may be, in process of time, more and more acted upon, will not hinder those, of whom there will probably always be many in the world, who worship the powers of good and evil alike, from bending the knee at the very name of a conqueror. Nevertheless, no one who feels for human suffering, and who knows what an enormous amount of the worst kinds and degrees of human suffering is inflicted by such conquests as William the Norman made in Saxon England,† can hesitate

* And when any nation, at least any European nation, insists upon seeking to invade the territory of its neighbours, the rational course would be, when other milder courses have been found ineffective, to blot it, as a nation, from the map of Europe. It is surely monstrous that at this time of day the pretence of Waterloo should be advanced for France seeking to invade England. Where was the battle of Waterloo fought? Not on French territory. If Napoleon Bonaparte, or any other disturber of the peace of Europe, were beaten on invading another country, his representatives and abettors have no pretence for repeating the same crime by way of retaliation for the former failure. Europe is sufficiently advanced now to put an effectual stop to a further repetition of such outrages.

† M. Thierry's *History of the Norman Conquest*, of which there are now several English translations, places before the reader a vivid and terrible picture of the miseries inflicted by such a conquest. Men in the state in which both the Normans and Saxons were, differ little from beasts of prey, save that, in addition to the appetites and instincts of such animals, they have the aid of a certain amount of human intelligence and human calculations. The Romans were never anything else but such human beasts of prey. And there are even in the most humane and civilized communities many individuals who are such human beasts of prey.

for a moment to draw the proper line of distinction between such heroes as Epaminondas and Alexander called the Great, as Alfred called the Great and William the Norman, as Robert Bruce and Edward Longshanks, as George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte.

Fearful indeed are the consequences of a great successful crime perpetrated by a great man. What centuries of misery and degradation followed the success of Cæsar the Dictator! Bad as the Roman oligarchy were, what were all their tyrannies and crimes compared to the before unimagined horrors of the reigns of Tiberius, of Caligula, of Nero, of Domitian, and a long series of imperial fiends, each stamped with its own individual impress of cruelty and wickedness? To take an example from more modern times. The English ambassadors at the court of Prussia, Sir Andrew Mitchell and Lord Malmesbury, have enabled us to form an idea of the extent to which a successful robber-tyrant—in pursuing his own profligate objects, self-aggrandizement, and self-worship; his conduct being dictated by fraud, vanity, and avarice—may be enabled to crush and brutalize a whole nation.* There is a broad distinction between the worship of such men

* See Sir Andrew Mitchell's *Memoirs and Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 337, 342, 343, &c., and the Earl of Malmesbury's *Diaries and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 97.

under the name of heroes, from choice, and the worship of them by those who had no choice: as in the Roman Senate's decree of a statue to Julius Cæsar supported on a figure of the earth, with the inscription "Semideus;" in the deification of the two first Cæsars by the contemporary Roman poets; and in Milton's adulation of Cromwell, in which he only imitated the adulation of one of the most accomplished men to the most accomplished man and largest robber of all antiquity.* In those cases, men gave worship or adulation in return for protection.

Moreover, though, as regards foreign nations, conquerors may be regarded as large and bold robbers, as regards their own nation they often descend to

* "Quod si rerum tuarum immortalium, C. Cæsar, hic exitus futurus fuit, ut, devictis adversariis, rempublicam in eo statu relinqueres, in quo nunc est: vide, quæso, ne tua divina virtus admirationis plus sit habitura, quam gloriæ: siquidem gloria est illustris ac pervagata multorum et magnorum, vel in suos, vel in patriam, vel in omne genus hominum, fama meritorum. Nec vero hæc tua vita ducenda est, quæ corpore et spiritu continetur: illa, inquam, illa vita est tua, quæ vigebit memoriâ sæculorum omnium: quam posteritas alet, quam ipsa æternitas semper tuebitur."—Cic. *Orat. pro M. Marcello*. It is instructive to compare this exhibition of adulatory rhetoric with what the same man has said of Cæsar *after* his death, Cic. *De Off.*, iii. 21. Whether Cæsar or Alexander were the larger robber, to the former as to the latter the words, in the same language as the slavish panegyric quoted above, and remarkable as being in the language of a nation of robbers, are applicable—

"Felix terrarum prædo, non utile mundo
Editus exemplum."

that species of robbery known by the name of swindling—for debasing the coin is a mode of swindling their own subjects. From the earliest times in England till the reign of Edward III., the denomination of money had never been altered. A pound sterling was a pound troy; that is, about three pounds of our present money. The conqueror, Edward III., coined twenty-five shillings from a pound troy; and Henry V. coined thirty shillings from a pound troy. It is evident to what extent they thereby defrauded those to whom they owed money. To what extent another conqueror, Frederick II. of Prussia, defrauded his subjects in this way, will appear from the following passage of a despatch of the English ambassador, dated Berlin, 5th March, 1763:—"His Prussian Majesty affirms that he has laid no taxes whatever upon his subjects; though at the same time it is evident that, by the alteration and diminution of the coin, his subjects have, since the beginning of the war, lost two-thirds of their personal estate, being paid at the rate of thirty-three for one hundred."*

The distinction between heroes and conquerors is completely in accordance with the old and proper meaning of the much-abused word "hero," which Lord Bacon thus notices: "*Rerumpub. conditores, legislatores, tyrannicidæ, patres patriæ, quique in rebus civilibus optime meruerunt, insigniti sunt*

* *Mitchell Papers*, vol. ii. p. 343.

titulo heroum.”* In this definition of “hero,” it will be observed, that, while it comprehends such men as Socrates, Hampden, Turgot, and Franklin, conquerors are not included; nor those men—however strong in mind and body, and however successful in their enterprises—who acted towards their country as Cæsar, Cromwell, and Bonaparte did. The proper name for such men is not “heroës,” but “tyranni.” But in some modern cosmogonies hero-worship is synonymous with devil-worship.†

* *De Augm. Scient.* lib. i. Bacon, according to his custom, has repeated this enumeration in his English works. Thus, in the *Advancement of Learning*, p. 62, vol. ii. of Montagu’s edition, he says—placing “inventors and authors of new arts” above heroes—“There were reckoned, above human honours, honours heroical and divine; in the attribution and distribution of which honours, we see, antiquity made this difference—that whereas founders and uniters of states and cities, lawgivers, extirpers of tyrants, fathers of the people, and other eminent persons in civil merit, were honoured but with the titles of worthies or demigods: on the other side, such as were inventors and authors of new arts, endowments, and commodities towards man’s life, were ever consecrated among the gods themselves.” The same idea is found in his *Essays*—in the *Essay of Honour and Reputation*. Like most great writers, Bacon is in the habit of repeating himself. In the *De Augmentis*—his last work, published in 1623, shortly before his death, which took place in 1626, and twenty-six years after the publication of his *Essays*—the idea is in a greatly more correct form, for in the *Essays* he inserts among “heroes” some men omitted in the *De Augmentis*, who, though great men undoubtedly, could not be classed among the benefactors of mankind, and whose worship belongs more to devil-worship than to hero-worship.

† The following advertisement, which appeared in respectable newspapers not long since, may be adduced as a significant commentary on the effects of the modern distorted views of hero-worship and heroine-worship:—“*Heroines of History*. By —.

There is nothing new in this worship of successful crime, nor in the arguments by which it is defended. Both the worship and the defence of it existed more than two thousand years ago, and will probably exist more than two thousand years hence, if this world lasts so long. In that state of society which existed among the Athenians for a century before the fall of Athens, it was the common creed of sophists and politicians. We have a type of these politicians and sophists in Callicles, one of the speakers in Plato's *Gorgias*. Callicles, by way of refuting Socrates, contends that his arguments about justice and injustice apply only to what is just and unjust by institution or law, not by nature; that laws, being made by the many and the weak to protect them-

Illustrated by ——. Comprising sketches of the following distinguished females mentioned in history:—Semiramis, Cleopatra, Catherine de' Medici, Mary Stuart, Madame de Maintenon, &c." This advertisement of "distinguished females," "heroines of history," adds—"it forms a most appropriate present for a young lady." Heaven help the poor young ladies who worship at such shrines! The records of our criminal courts already begin to show the effects of such moral lessons as naturally flow from panegyric lives of the pupils of Catherine de' Medici, written with a total disregard of all the rules of historical evidence. The panegyrists of these "heroes" and "heroines," perhaps, think that actions which in ordinary men and women are the blackest crimes, are lawful in them, as they were esteemed lawful in the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies. For the true character of one of these heroines, see the State Papers, published by M. Von Raumer, relating to Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots, pp. 68, 69, and 70. We only want now the lives of Messalina and Agrippina, written in the same florid, panegyric strain, and with the same disregard to the sifting and weighing of evidence.

selves against the strong, have instituted a false standard of just and unjust. "But nature herself," says this Athenian apostle of hero-worship, "shows that it is just for the better to take more than the worse, and the stronger than the weaker." She shows this in the other animals and in whole nations and races of men. If a man arise adequately endowed by nature, he tramples upon our statutes and all institutions contrary to nature, becomes our master, and the justice of nature shines forth in him. Pindar indicates this in the ode in which he says that Hercules took away the oxen of Geryon, neither buying them nor receiving them by gift; this being natural justice, and all the possessions of the worse and the weaker belonging of right to the better and the stronger. Upon Socrates asking if it was necessary for any one to command himself, but only other people, Callicles asks in return what Socrates means by commanding himself. Socrates replies, that he means only what the vulgar mean, to be temperate and sober, governing his own pleasures and desires.

"How pleasant you are!" exclaims Callicles; "you describe a simpleton, and call him a sober person. How can a person be happy if he is a slave to anything? I freely tell you, that what is noble and just by nature is, that he who would live well should allow his desires to attain the greatest possible strength, and

never restrain them ; and should be capable, by his courage and talents, of satisfying his desires, however great they may be. But of this the many are incapable ; and therefore do they censure such conduct to hide their own impotence, and pretend that self-indulgence is a vile thing ; and because they are not capable of ministering to their own appetites, they praise temperance and justice from mere unmanliness. For, in reality, to those who are born to a throne, or who are capable by their natural endowments of raising themselves to despotic power, what can be more ignoble or more contemptible than self-control ? ” *

In another part of the same dialogue, another sophist, Polus, relates a series of crimes by which Archelaus had risen to the throne of Macedonia, intermixing much sarcastic irony (of a quality not inferior in polish to that used for the purpose of ridiculing opponents by the advocates of successful criminals in these days) on the notion of Socrates that Archelaus was unhappy and unenviable ; ending by saying — “ and do you suppose there is a single Athenian, beginning with yourself, who would not rather be Archelaus than any other of the Macedonians ? ”

Perhaps the most worthy to excite the admiration of those who admire great ability and energy exercised for the oppression and plunder, the slaughter

* *Plat. Gorg.* p. 98, Bip.

and degradation of mankind, was Julius Cæsar. No such splendid criminal had then appeared, or Polus would have selected him much rather than Archelaus. Cæsar is said to have defeated in battle altogether three millions of men, to have slain one-third of this number, and led another third into captivity. Allowing for considerable exaggeration in this estimate, the carnage of the Gallic war, according to Cæsar's own account, must have been very great. At the same time, for his ulterior objects, he neglected no opportunity of amassing riches; and, with this view, plundered both the temples of the Gallic deities, and the territories of allies as well as enemies. To Cæsar, as to the Athenian sophists and politicians and their modern successors, everything appeared just and honourable that served as a step towards absolute dominion; and Cicero relates that Cæsar had often on his lips the passage of Euripides, that "if justice is to be violated, it ought to be for sovereign power." *

* εἴπερ γὰρ ἀδικεῖν χρη, τυραννίδος πέρι
κάλλιστον ἀδικεῖν.—Eurip. *Phœniss.* v. 534.

Porson, in his note on this verse, after giving Cicero's translation of it (*De Off.* iii. 21.), remarks on Cicero's observation "capitalis Eteocles, vel potius Euripides, qui id unum, quod sceleratissimum fuerit, exceperit,"—"ubi ineptum additamentum esse ea verba, *vel potius Euripides*, recte monuit Wytttenbachius."—*Bibl. Crit.* part iii. p. 30. The terms in which Cicero relates this, show that the passage must have been written (if intended to be made public at the time when it was written) after the death of Cæsar, that is, some time during the two years that Cicero survived

It is to be observed, however, that though Plato represents this approbation of successful crime as not confined to the sophists, but extending to a large proportion of the Athenians of his age and of the age of Socrates, the Greeks never elevated a successful usurper who had raised himself to absolute power by trampling down the community into a hero or demigod; indeed, the superior spirits among both the Greeks and Romans have employed their abilities, not in extolling successful tyrants and in trying to sneer down all who do not extol them, but in painting them as criminals on whom the internal tortures of remorse, the terrible Erinnys, avenged the wrongs of mankind. Plato and Tacitus have exhausted the powers of language in depicting those "wounds and lacerations" which the minds of tyrants would disclose if they were laid open.* "Far from considering," to borrow the words of Mr. Grote, "success in usurpation as a justification of the attempt (according to the theories now prevalent respecting Cromwell and Bonaparte, who are often blamed because they kept out a legitimate king, but never because they seized on unauthorized power over the people), these philosophers regard the despot as among the greatest of criminals."†

Cæsar: the murder of the great general and statesman was soon followed by that of the great orator, for such, notwithstanding his faults, he must be called.

* Plat. *Repub.* ix. pp. 255, 256, Bip.; Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 6.

† Grote's *History of Greece*, vol. iii. p. 36.

While endeavouring to enforce the importance of the right use of the word "hero," we ought not to lose sight of another distinction which Bacon has also noticed. For while the class above mentioned were honoured but with the titles of heroes or demi-gods, "on the other side," adds Bacon, "such as were inventors and authors of new arts, endowments, and commodities towards man's life, were ever consecrated among the gods themselves: and justly; for the merit of the former is confined within the circle of an age or a nation, and is like fruitful showers, which, though they be profitable and good, yet serve but for that season, and for a latitude of ground where they fall; but the other is indeed like the benefits of Heaven, which are permanent and universal."*

Now, of this class of benefactors of mankind who rank above heroes, I would here venture to name three, by way of illustration of what Bacon calls permanent and universal benefits, as distinguished from those confined to one age or one nation. The three names are Simon de Montfort, Bacon himself, and Adam Smith. In regard to Adam Smith, there hardly needs any comment. In regard to Bacon, if what is here said should appear inconsistent with some parts of his conduct, I would observe that, though the moral obliquity of Bacon's nature was the cause of his

* *Advancement of Learning*, pp. 62-3, vol. ii. of Montagu's edition. London, 1825.

doing some evil in his time, the evil was comparatively temporary and local, while the good done by his intellect is permanent and universal. As for Simon de Montfort, besides his title to "hero" for his victories, and death in defence of liberty, I place him with Bacon and Adam Smith for his discovery of what has been called by a modern philosopher "the divine principle" of representative government, for want of which all the ancient practical experiments in government failed.

Plato, seeing clearly the necessity, for the purpose of good government, of identifying the interests of the governors and the governed, but being ignorant of the principle of representation, saw no way of accomplishing the object he had in view but by prescribing a very artificial system of education for the class of rulers, which should make them philosophers; laying it down as a universal truth, that there can be no happiness for States until either philosophers are the rulers or the rulers philosophers—an idea which Bacon has repeated in almost the same words—"tum demum respublicas fore felices, cum aut philosophi regnant, aut reges philosophantur."*

* Bacon *De Augm.* lib. i. p. 76, ed. Lugd. Batav. 1645. The same idea is thus expressed in his *Advancement of Learning*:—"For although he might be thought partial to his own profession that said, 'Then should people and estates be happy, when either kings were philosophers, or philosophers kings;' yet so much is verified by experience, that under learned princes and governors there have been ever the best times."—p. 64, Montagu's edition.

It is difficult to speak with absolute certainty of a fact so remote. But it appears to be generally admitted that Simon de Montfort first reduced to practice, if he did not first devise, that which has been designated the grand discovery of modern times—the principle of representation. Strange, that a warlike baron, in a rude and dark age, should hit upon that which the greatest philosophers of antiquity had missed in all their profound political speculations; and for want of which all the attempts at good government made by the most free and enlightened nations of antiquity had proved such utter failures:—a discovery, compared to which, if the value of discoveries is to be tested by their results, the boasted discoveries of more recent times must sink into comparative insignificance.

When a right estimate of military virtue, and a true measure of military glory, come at last to be taken, Englishmen—whether they be of Norman, of Saxon, or of Celtic name or origin—will in time perhaps discover that few indeed of those to whom they have raised monuments and statues possess an equal claim upon their gratitude with the men who died sword in hand with De Montfort on the bloody field of Evesham, fighting for England's rights and the world's liberties and well-being. Simon de Montfort, indeed, their great leader, was not born in England. But, if of any man, it may be said of him who introduced that representative system

which the whole world as it gradually emerges into civilization is borrowing from the land to which De Montfort gave it, that the world is his country, and that the world's mightiest mountains form the monument of him "whose realm refused him even a tomb."*

That degree of honour called by the Greeks "apotheosis," and by the Latins "relatio inter divos," was, as Bacon observes, "the supreme honour which man could attribute unto man: especially when it was given,—not by a formal decree, or act of State, as it was used among the Roman emperors, but by an inward assent and belief." Of this supreme honour, given by the inward assent and belief of mankind, there are no stronger proofs, no more enduring records, than those ancient ballads which have transmitted from generation to generation the names and exploits of De Montfort, Wallace, and Robin Hood: for Robin Hood, too, fought on the side of

* And the words used in the funeral oration of Pericles, "*ἀνδρῶν ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος*" (Thuc. ii. 43) may be applied to De Montfort if the sense which Hobbes has given to *γῆ* be used—"to famous men all the earth is a sepulchre:" which, however, is not what Thucydides meant here, his meaning, though the word *γῆ* is ambiguous, being, as appears from the context, not the whole earth absolutely, but only the territory of Attica—a meaning conveyed in Byron's lines—

"A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land."

De Montfort, for the liberties of England.* Such ballads have more power, rude though they be, than all the polished flattery and falsehood of the greatest court poets that ever existed; even though Virgil and Horace be at the head of them :

“ For one long-cherished ballad’s simple stave,
Rung from the rock, or mingled with the wave,
Hath greater power o’er each true heart and ear,
Than all the columns conquest’s minions rear.”

These three—De Montfort, Wallace, and Robin Hood—have enjoyed that apotheosis which is conferred by a nation’s assent and belief; of which one manifestation is the popularity of the ballads reciting their deeds. Upon the whole, Wallace in Scotland has enjoyed this apotheosis the longest and the most thoroughly. Of the effect of the rude but simple narrative of the *Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace*,” by Henry the Minstrel, I have in the course of my life met with some remarkable proofs. To give one instance:—An old man-of-war’s man once said to a friend of mine—“ I would do any thing for you, sir,—there was a ——” (pronouncing his name) “ with Wallace.” Here was surely a genuine case of hero-worship. Wallace, and this follower of his, one of his captains who fought and perished for Scotland, had been dead 550 years; but

* This has been shown in a most able and elaborate paper on Robin Hood, in the *London and Westminster Review* for March, 1840.

the eye of the dullest peasant in Scotland will still brighten at the very sound of their names, though the country they saved has raised neither tomb, nor temple, nor column, nor even the humblest tablet, to their memory; and though no tribute is exacted to keep alive

“ The lamps that burn
Before each low and lonely urn ”—

not the “dying lamps” before the tomb in Melrose Abbey, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, but the lamps that cannot die, or at least will continue to burn until the race of human beings shall have passed away, to whom those men’s names are a spell far more powerful than the names of kings. Burns only expressed more forcibly than they could have done it themselves the sentiments of thousands of his countrymen, when, after saying, “ The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any books I ever read since, were the *Life of Hannibal*, and the *History of Sir William Wallace*,”—he added, “ The story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.”

The peculiar merit of Simon de Montfort, which gives him a claim to a rank both among “heroes” and among those who are above “heroes,” will appear from the sentence with which Bacon concludes the paragraph, from which a quotation

has been made, in his *Advancement of Learning*. "The former again," he adds (that is, the benefit derived from the work of heroes), "is mixed with strife and perturbation; but the latter" (that is, the benefit derived from the labours of inventors and authors of new arts towards man's life) "hath the true character of Divine presence, coming 'in auraleni,' without noise or agitation." Now the work of Simon de Montfort partook of both; for while it possessed the divine character of permanence and universality, it was necessarily marked also with the heroic character of human strife and perturbation.

But to return to the more vulgar subject of conquerors and their work. One may form a tolerably correct idea of what sort of evils more remote conquerors inflicted upon mankind, from those inflicted in our own time by nations termed civilized. In a proclamation to the people of Portugal, dated 4th August, 1810, the Duke of Wellington, then Viscount Wellington, said:

"The time which has elapsed, during which the enemy have remained upon the frontiers of Portugal, has fortunately afforded to the Portuguese nation experience of what they are to expect from the French.

"The people had remained in some villages, trusting to the enemy's promises, and vainly believing that, by treating the enemies of their country in a friendly manner, they would conciliate their forbearance, and that their properties would be

respected, their women would be saved from violation, and that their lives would be spared.

“Vain hopes! The people of those devoted villages have suffered every evil which a cruel enemy could inflict. Their property has been plundered, their houses and furniture burnt; their women have been ravished, and the unfortunate inhabitants whose age or sex did not tempt the brutal violence of the soldiers, have fallen the victims of the imprudent confidence they reposed in promises which were made only to be violated.”*

Again, in a despatch to the Earl of Liverpool, dated 14th March, 1811, he says:—“I am concerned to be obliged to add to this account, that their (the French) conduct throughout this retreat has been marked by a barbarity seldom equalled, and never surpassed. . . . This is the mode in which the promises have been performed, and the assurances have been fulfilled, which were held out in the proclamation of the French commander-in-chief, in which he told the inhabitants of Portugal that he was not come to make war upon them, but with a powerful army of 110,000 men to drive the English into the sea.”†

Of similar treatment experienced by the Spaniards

* *Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, p. 375, No. 426.

† *Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, p. 449, No. 507.

at the same hands, the same authentic documents contain abundant evidence.

But this is only one side of the picture. Such are the dreadful effects of war, that, although the English commander exerted himself strenuously and unceasingly to repress and punish all excesses in his soldiers, the unfortunate inhabitants sometimes suffered the like evils from those who came to defend, as from those who came to attack them. On this point the Duke of Wellington says, in the memorandum on the proposed plan for altering the discipline of the army, dated 22nd April, 1829—"Let us only refer to our orderly books in the Peninsula. Let us remember the horrors committed by small detachments on their marches to join the army, notwithstanding the anxious care taken to prevent them."*

And if further and more minute evidence be required, it may be found in many of the memoirs written by officers and soldiers engaged in that war. Perhaps those may be particularly referred to which contain the relation (confirmed by the general order of the Duke of Wellington, dated Badajoz, 8th April, 1812) of the atrocities committed by the British soldiers, after the storm of Badajoz, on the Spanish inhabitants, whom they had come to protect.

* *Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, p. 919, No. 1013.

And are all these, then, heroes? One would think not, with the permission of the hero-worshippers. Truly does the Duke of Wellington, who ought to know something of the matter, say—"Believe me, that every man you see in a military uniform is not a hero."*

There is a remarkable parallel between an expression of the Duke of Wellington, in a letter to the Earl of Liverpool, dated "Sta. Marinha, 23rd March, 1811," and the sentiment (though no one would accuse the illustrious Duke of being in the ordinary sense of the term a "man of sentiment") put by Homer into the mouth of Hector. The Duke says:—"I shall be sorry if Government should think themselves under the necessity of withdrawing from this country, on account of the expense of the contest. From what I have seen of the objects of the French Government and the sacrifices they make to accomplish them, I have no doubt that if the British army were for any reason to withdraw from the Peninsula, and the French Government were relieved from the pressure of military operations on the Continent, they would incur all risks to land an army in his Majesty's dominions. Then indeed would commence an expensive contest; then would his Majesty's subjects discover what are the miseries of war, of which, by the blessing of God,

* *Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington*, p. 887, No. 986.

they have hitherto had no knowledge; and the cultivation, the beauty, and prosperity of the country, and the virtue and happiness of its inhabitants, would be destroyed, whatever might be the result of the military operations. God forbid that I should be a witness, much less an actor in the scene.”*

Hector, after alluding to the miseries to be inflicted by the Greeks on Troy when it falls, adds:—

’Αλλά με τεθνεῖωτα χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει,
Πρὶν γ’ ἔτι σῆς τε βοῆς σὺν θ’ ἔλκηθμοῖο πυθέσθαι.

* *Gurwood's Selections from the Despatches of the Duke of Wellington*, No. 515, p. 457. And in his memorable letter to Sir John Burgoyne in 1847, the Duke says, “I am bordering on seventy-seven years, passed in honour. I hope that the Almighty may protect me from being the witness of the tragedy which I cannot persuade my contemporaries to take measures to avert.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE NORMANS.

WHEN the world was some fifteen hundred years older since the Latian shepherds founded their city, which was to become in time the imperial city, there arose in another part of Europe a race of men animated at first with the same passion for conquest which marked the Romans. The march of these men too, like that of the Romans, was always onward, and they met with no obstacles which they did not finally overcome. But, as elements both of humanity and wisdom unknown to the Romans have entered into their policy, it may be concluded that, though their beginning somewhat resembled the beginning of the shepherds who founded the city of the Seven Hills, their end, which is not yet—and which I hope may be far distant—will not be like theirs.

At a time when the ancient civilization, such as it was, might be said to have reached its highest point—the point from which it began rapidly to decline—Horace extolled the courage, which appeared to him

miraculous, of the first man who committed himself in a frail bark to the merciless sea. This expression of Horace's is only an exponent of the fact that the ancients never attained to that skill and confidence in navigation which made the lines of a modern poet no empty boast, when applied to the Norsemen and their descendants—

“ Their march is o'er the mountain waves,
Their home is on the deep.”

In the fact of this difference, lies, I apprehend, the essential superiority of modern civilization to ancient; and without this, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, with all its antecedents, and still more all its consequences, would never have been written. A Roman's notion of the “wealth of nations” consisted, not in the free interchange of the produce of free industry, but in the absorption of the produce of all industry by the military robber, and the consumption of that produce in a life of luxury which combined the politics of a slave with the morals of a hog.

The whole coast of Norway is surrounded by a fringe of islands, in some places two or three deep, which are separated from the mainland and from each other by channels more or less broad, but always deep. The outer range of these islands is seldom inhabited at all; never on the seaward sides, which, exposed to the first sweep of the south-wester, are bold rocks, either quite bare or nourishing a scanty growth of stunted fir or ragged juniper, but

affording neither food nor shelter, and rarely fresh water. At the present day, the whole of the coasting trade of Norway is carried on within this barrier, and the houses and villages lie hidden on the sheltered shores of the numerous channels, or fiords, so as to be altogether unseen from the outside. As a swimmer learns his art first in comparatively smooth and safe water, so the old Norsemen first learnt skill and confidence in the management of their barks, which were in time to change the face of the world, in navigating the deep, but smooth channels within this rocky island barrier that encircled their iron-bound coast.

In a country like Norway, which (though, in the way above indicated, it may be termed the cradle of modern civilization) has not altered its customs for centuries, may be still found the unmistakeable indications of those qualities of seamanship which were the characteristics of the ancient Norsemen, and are those of their English descendants. The genius of the Norsemen for naval affairs is still manifest even in their smallest boats: for example, in the Norwegian skiff, the peculiarity of the construction of which consists in the lower part of its bows projecting some distance above the surface of the water, and in its bottom being flat like that of a coble, so as to enable it to rise over the most stormy waves. It is manifest in their larger vessels, built after the model of a whale's body; in their jagts (the originals

of the English yachts, for Norway is the only nation besides England that takes its pleasure on the deep sea); in the sharp fore and aft vessels of Bergen, and in the Lyngör lobster smacks.

To those who delight to track the course of races and nations, it is interesting to follow the fortunes of the early Normans; so full of strange vicissitudes, of adventures so marvellous as to resemble rather the wildest tales of romance than the actual events of history, of enterprises marked by such a combination of great and sustained energy, wonderful sagacity, and unbounded daring.

About the end of the ninth century the extension by conquest of the dominion of Harold Harfagher, king of a part of Norway, over the whole of that country, caused the destruction of several smaller States which had formerly been independent. Many of the principal men of those States chose to expatriate themselves and lead a wandering life by sea, rather than obey a king foreign to their own particular districts. These men became pirates by necessity, and a portion of them, who were mostly men of high birth and high military renown, made the Orcades and Hebrides their places of refuge.*

Soon after, Rollo, a son of one of the Norwegian chiefs of the highest rank, having been banished from Norway by Harold, collected some barks and sailed towards the Hebrides. The Norwegian exiles

* Thierry, *History of the Norman Conquest*, liv. ii.

united all their ships or barks, and thus made up a considerable fleet, under the command of no single chief, but of the confederate captains. Setting sail from the Hebrides, they possessed themselves of one of the finest provinces of France, and there, about the year 912, founded a small independent State, which afterwards conquered some of the fairest and most fertile portions of Europe, and founded one of the greatest empires of the modern world: which thus, like the greatest empire of the ancient world, may be said to have owed its origin to a small band of outlawed men.

The small fleet of the Norsemen that doubled the northern headland of Scotland and sailed towards the mouth of the Seine, might be said to carry the germ of fortunes greater and more wonderful than those of Æneas or Cæsar. It may be here added, that the Saxons' conquest of Britain differed from the Norsemen's conquest of Normandy, England, and Italy, not in being less of a predatory character, but in possessing less of the character of a great enterprise commenced with small beginnings—the "*parvis ab initiis profecta*" of the historian of the conquerors of the ancient world.

In regard to the predatory character of the occupation of both the early Saxons and Normans, we must allow them the benefit of being judged, so far at least, by the standard of morals of their age. According to the popular feeling, and the public opinion of

their time, the old national custom of roaming the seas was universally held to be among the most honourable of employments. It was the same in the earlier stages of other nations the most illustrious in history. Thucydides informs us that the early Greeks counted piracy a thing to be proud, not ashamed of.* And we must not forget the very broad distinction between the predatory life of men in the condition of the wild Norsemen of the eighth and ninth centuries—which did not violate, but, on the contrary, strictly conformed to the obligations of their religion, the precepts of their education, and the example of their forefathers—and the robberies, whether by force or fraud, of men in a different state of society, who know such acts to be a direct violation at once of the public opinion of their age, and of the laws both of their country and their God.

The fleet of the Norsemen finally entered the Seine, and ascended that river to Jumiegès, five leagues distant from Rouen. The townsmen of Rouen, alarmed at the report of the devastations of the Norsemen, and without hope of immediate succour from the King of France, concluded a truce with Roll and his companions; guaranteeing their free admission into the city, and receiving in return an assurance that

* Οὐκ ἔχοντός πω αἰσχύνῃν τούτου τοῦ ἔργου, φέροντος δὲ τι καὶ δόξης μᾶλλον.—Thuc. i. 5, and see the whole chapter, which describes a mode of life very similar to that of the Scandinavian pirates of times two thousand years later.

they would commit no injury. The Norwegian leaders visited every quarter of the town; attentively examined the ramparts, the quays, the fountains; and decided on converting the place into a military post and making it the chief town of their intended establishment (A. D. 898).

Leaving a garrison in Rouen, they continued to ascend the Seine with the main body of their troops, established a fortified camp at the confluence of the rivers Seine and Eure, and there awaited the approach of a French army that was marching against them. The troops of Karl, or Charles, then king of the French, a degenerate descendant of Karl the Great, or Charlemagne, commanded by Regnault, who bore the title of Duke of France, took up a position on the right bank of the Eure, at a short distance from the camp of the Normans.

Three envoys, one of whom was Hasting, formerly a famous sea-king but then Count of Chartres, and the other two, persons who understood the Danish language, were despatched to hold a conference with the Normans. The envoys followed the course of the Eure till they came to the spot directly opposite the Norman intrenchment, and then the Count of Chartres, raising his voice so as to be heard on the other side of the river, shouted, "Hallo, brave warriors! what is the name of your lord?" "We have no lord," replied the Normans: "we are all equal." "Wherefore have you come to this coun-

try?" asked the envoy, "and what do you intend to do here?" "To drive out the inhabitants, or subject them to our rule, and to make this our country. But what art thou, who speakest so well our language?" "Have ye not heard," answered the envoy, "of Hasting, the famous pirate, who scoured the seas with so many ships and caused so many evils to this kingdom?" "Doubtless we have," replied the Normans: "Hasting began well, but he has made a bad end." "Are you willing to submit yourselves unto King Charles?"* asked the envoy. "By no means," was the reply: "we will make submission to no one; and all that we can conquer shall belong to ourselves, without reserve. Go and tell this, if you will, to the king, whose envoy you boast yourself."

In the attack of the intrenched camp which followed, the French troops were totally defeated; and thenceforth the greater part of the territory which bore the ancient name of Neustria fell under the dominion of the Norsemen or Normans, and took the name of Normandy (A. D. 900 to 911). "The Normans," says M. Thierry, "guided by a policy which was the result of good sense, ceased from their wonted display of cruelty when resistance was no longer offered to them, and were content with

* M. Thierry adds, "who offers you fiefs and honours on the condition of allegiance and knights' service," but this is not in the Latin writers whom he quotes at the foot of his page.

a contribution regularly levied in the towns and country. Good sense also dictated the creation of a supreme leader, to be invested with permanent authority.”* The choice fell upon Roll, or Rollo, who, in 912, accepted King Charles’s offer of his daughter in marriage, with the hereditary lordship of Neustria and Brittany, and consented to become a Christian, to live in peace with the king, and to be his “feudal man and soldier.” He then portioned out Normandy among his Norwegians, who became his “feudal men and soldiers.”

Some of the details of the negotiation between the Norman and the Frank king are curiously characteristic of that time, when the fairest portions of Europe fell to the armed robber who had strength and resolution to seize them. When the Archbishop of Rouen came to Rollo with the King of France’s offer, which only comprehended the hereditary lordship of all the country situated between the river Epte and Brittany, Rollo answered, “The king’s words are good; but the land which he proffers me is insufficient: it is uncultivated and impoverished; my followers would not find therein what would enable them to live in peace.”

The archbishop returned to the king, who then commissioned him to make an offer of Flanders, in his name; although he possessed no other rights over that country than a contested claim—an offer something

* *History of the Norman Conquest*, liv. ii.

similar to what at the present day would be a present to a man of a Chancery suit. The shrewd Norseman did not accept of this new offer, but replied, that Flanders was a bad country, boggy, and full of marshes. Charles the Simple then sent word to the Norman chieftain that, if he liked, he might hold Brittany in a fief conjointly with Neustria; though the allegiance due to the kings of France therein was for little more than the county of Rennes. But Rollo paid little regard to that obstacle, and accepted the offer.

At the ceremony of ratifying this treaty, when the other forms had been gone through, it was intimated to the Norman chieftain by the French lords that, in conformity with the etiquette anciently observed at the court of the Frank emperors, he must kneel before the king and kiss his foot; the Norman replied, "Never will I bend the knee to any man, nor will I kiss any man's foot." The lords continuing to insist on this matter of form, Rollo beckoned to one of his men to advance, and kiss, in his stead, the king's foot. The Norman soldier took the king's foot, but without bending his knee, and raised it so high to lift it to his lips that the king was thrown on his back. A loud shout of laughter burst from the rough Norsemen, and for a moment some tumult arose; but the new feudatories were too formidable, and the French king too weak, for any result to follow.

By way of set-off or counterpoise to the cant of pseudo-philanthropy and false civilization, another cant has arisen, which is not new, but merely a revival under a somewhat different form of the old cant of Tacitus, of Montaigne, and of Rousseau—the cant of barbarian energy and strength. One set of writers takes up for extravagant eulogy the enterprising energy and unbounded daring of the Normans; another, the bold freedom and manly simplicity of the Saxons. But, in truth, both Normans and Saxons, with some virtues, and the germs of many more virtues, were then chiefly notable for the brutal vices which characterize all races in the state of civilization in which they were; and for none more than the tyranny and cruelty with which they treated those whom fortune had placed in their power. In this state of society men differ little from beasts of prey; save that, in addition to the appetites and instincts of such animals, they have other faculties which make them act somewhat under the impulse of human passions, and by the aid of human calculations. In that age, as indeed through all ages, a man such as the Anglo-Saxon Alfred, as he has come down to posterity, and if we can believe all that has been said of his genius, his wisdom, and his virtues, stands altogether alone, like a solitary star shining through drifting masses of dark, stormy clouds.

So grievous was the oppression exercised by the

Normans over the unfortunate race which they had deprived of their country, that, in less than a century after the founding of the new State, the old population formed the resolution of making a strong effort to destroy, at least, the inequality of the two races. It was during the reign of Rikhart, or Richard II., the third in succession from Rollo, that this great project came to a head. In most of the cantons of Normandy the inhabitants of the towns and large villages, of the hamlets and homesteads, began to meet in the evening after the hours of labour, and to talk over the misery of their condition. They then entered into an agreement, under the obligation of an oath, to keep in a body and to assist one another against all aggressors.

“The kind of association,” says M. Thierry, “thus entered into was, in those days, known by the word *Commune*; a term that became renowned in the cities of France a century later. But that which was especially to be then remarked, and which never was again the case in any quarter, is, that the *commune* of Normandy, in the year 997, was not restricted to one city, or to a league of several towns, but included the country parts, and comprised in a great fraternity all classes of the native population. The men affiliated in this association were divided into their respective circles, which the original historians designate by the word *conventicles*; there was, at least, one of those for each

county, and each of them delegated two of its members to form a superior circle, or central assembly. That assembly was to prepare and organize, in all the districts, the means of resistance and of a general rising; it despatched from one canton to another, and from village to village, eloquent and plausible emissaries to gain over new associates, and to receive their oaths.”*

While things were in this state, and just about to break out into open rebellion, news came to the court of Normandy that the villeins were holding *parlements*. Duke Richard, being of too tender an age to direct affairs by his own judgment, sent for his uncle, the Count of Evreux. “Sire,” said the Count, “do you remain tranquil, and leave those peasants to me. Do not quit your own court, but send to me as many knights and men-at-arms as you can muster.” The Count of Evreux, having learnt by means of intelligent spies the hour and place of meeting of the central assembly, marched with his troops, and arrested, in a single day, all the chief delegates of the combination. Without deigning to subject them to trial, he treated his prisoners with extreme barbarity, condemning them to suffer tortures which his subordinates made it their study to vary. Some had their eyes put out, their hands cut off, and their hamstrings branded; others were impaled; others

* *History of the Norman Conquest*, liv. ii.

were roasted at a slow fire, or had molten lead showered on them. The few who survived these torments were sent home to their families, and led thus mutilated through the villages, thereby to strike terror. The effect intended was produced. "The great association," says M. Thierry, "was broken up; no more secret assemblies took place; and a sorrowful resignation succeeded, during seven centuries, the enthusiasm of a brief moment."—(A.D. 997—1013.)

Such were the tender mercies of the Normans to their conquered subjects in Normandy. When, some fifty years later, that great expedition against England took place, they obtained, by the mysterious decrees of Providence, the power, for a time, to treat the Anglo-Saxons as they had before treated the Gauls and Franks. This was the last great irruption of the restless barbarians who had for five hundred years convulsed and devastated Europe; after which they seem in some sense to have been at rest, and to cease from troubling.

I have said what there was to be said for the Normans' invasion of France: they were barbarians, they were pagans, they were expatriated men. The case some two centuries later was very much altered. There was no longer the excuse that they were in search of a country, and that they were acting in strict accordance both with the precepts of their religion and the example of their forefathers.

They were in quiet possession of one of the finest countries of Europe, and they not only professed themselves, but were, after the fashion of their age, most devout Christians, and especial favourites of his Holiness the Pope of Rome. Under these circumstances, their chief at that time (the bastard son of their last duke, Robert le Diable) made pretensions to the crown of England, which he ultimately carried at the cost of much bloodshed, and by the exercise of that mixture of craft and cruelty which formed his character. The mode in which William, son of Robert le Diable, went to work, is too characteristic, both of the man and the age, to be altogether passed over.

M. Thierry* states it to be the result of a minute investigation of all the political phenomena presented by the conquests of the middle ages, and of the share which religion, and especially the papal power, had in them, that if the popes did not go on military expeditions in person, they were parties to almost all the great invasions, and shared the spoil with the conquerors, even with conquerors who were still pagan; and that it was the destruction of the independent churches effected in Christian Europe, concurring with that of the free nations, which gave validity to the title of "universal" assumed by the Roman Church. "From the fifth to the thirteenth

* Introduction to the *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*.

century," says M. Thierry, "there was not a single conquest that was not profitable to the Court of Rome, as well as to those who had effected it by the lance and the sword; and this other feature, hitherto overlooked, of the history of the middle ages, has excited in me, with regard to the different national churches which the Church of Rome called heretical or schismatic, the same kind of interest which I have already mentioned as relative to the nations themselves. As the nations had fallen from their independence, so these churches also fell, without there having existed any positive right for their destruction; and the independence which they laid claim to, with respect to their doctrines and their self-government, was an integral portion of the moral liberty which had been consecrated or asserted by the Christian dispensation."

In 1031, when William was only seven years of age, his father, Robert le Diable, took it into his head to go to Jerusalem on foot, on a pilgrimage for the remission of his sins; and on his proposing to the Norman barons that they should swear fealty to his young son, most of them did what the duke proposed, because, says the old chronicle, they found it convenient. But several barons, particularly those of the Bessin and the Cotentin, more spirited than the others, and still prouder than they of the purity of their lineage, protested against this election, saying that a bastard was not worthy to command the Nor-

mans.* They levied a numerous army, but they were defeated by the other party, aided by the King of France, in a pitched battle in the Val-des-Dunes, near Caen. As William grew up to manhood, he displayed a disposition ambitious and vindictive to excess. His ambition was (like that of most men to whom the term is applied) to take what did not belong to him, to obtain power and dominion by whatever means and at whatever cost to others, even though the possession of them might be attended with the hatred of mankind.

The succession to the throne of England among the Anglo-Saxons appears to have been considered as being in certain families; subject, however, to such occasional deviations as the national will, guided by the public interest, required. At this time the throne was occupied by Edward the Confessor—a man feeble in mind and body, whose predilections for foreign favourites, and personal weakness of character, may be regarded as a proximate cause of the Norman invasion of England. Edward was the son of the Anglo-Saxon King Ethelred, by Emma, sister of Richard the Fourth, Duke of Normandy; and as he was only thirteen years old when he first went into Normandy, and somewhat past forty when he ascended the English throne, it was to be expected

* “Dicens quod nothus non deberet sibi aliisque Normannis imperare.”—Willelm. Gemet. *Hist. Normann.* apud Script. Rer. Normann. p. 268.

that his habits and taste would be rather Norman than English. But Edward allowed the force of those foreign tastes and habits to carry him beyond the line not only of prudence, but of his duty as an English king, for he conferred the high offices of trust and dignity on foreigners. The fortresses of the kingdom were placed in the keeping of Norman captains; Norman priests obtained English bishoprics, and became the king's chaplains and confidential councillors.

At the death of Ethelred, the English had chosen for their king, not one of his legitimate children who were residing in Normandy, but a natural son, Edmund surnamed Ironside, who had given some remarkable proofs of valour and skill. Edmund retook London from the Danes, and fought five great battles against them. After one of these battles, in which the Danes were defeated, one of their captains, named Ulf, flying for his life, struck into a wood, with the paths of which he was unacquainted. Having wandered all night, he met at daybreak a young peasant driving a herd of oxen, who told him he was Godwin, son of Ulfnoth, sheltered him all day in his father's cottage, and at night accompanied him as a guide to the Danish camp. Ulf obtained a military command for Godwin from King Knut, or Canute; and in the course of time, the Saxon herdsman rose to the rank of governor of a province in the part of England occupied by the Danes.

When the Danish King Knut died in 1035, he directed that his son by his Norman wife Emma (the mother of Edward by her former husband, the Saxon King Ethelred), named Hardeknut, or Hardicanute, should succeed him. Such an express designation of one son generally exercised an influence on those whom the Germanic customs invested with the right of election of a new king. But Hardicanute was then in Denmark, and the Danes of England chose Harald, another son of Canute, for their king. This election met with opposition. The south-western provinces proclaimed Hardicanute as king; while in London, the Danish soldiers and sailors proclaimed Harald. Godwin, son of Ulfnoth, was at that time governor of the great province of West-Sex, and he favoured the cause of Hardicanute. War, however, did not then take place, and Godwin and the other Saxon chiefs swore obedience to Harald, who was at his death succeeded by Hardicanute.

On the death of the latter in 1041, Godwin and his son Harald (or Harold, according to the Saxon orthography) raised the standard for the independence of their country against the Danes, and drove them out of England. Godwin, it has been said, might, had he wished it, have gotten himself named king of the English. But in accordance with his advice, a great council decided that a message from the nation should be sent to Edward in

Normandy, to announce to him that the English people had made him their king, but on condition of his bringing with him only a small number of Normans.

It is a long story, of which it is not our business here to tell more than is necessary to render somewhat intelligible the pretended claim of William the Norman to the dominion of England. It is sufficient to say that Godwin and his sons opposed all their power and popularity to the foreign influence which Edward brought with him into the English government; and that on the death of Godwin, Harald, his eldest son, succeeded his father in the command of all the country south of the Thames.

In 1065, Harald asked King Edward's permission to go into Normandy and claim two hostages; one of whom was his brother, and the other his nephew. Edward objected to Harald's going in person, on the ground that the journey would bring some misfortune on their country. "I know Duke William," he said, "and his crafty spirit. He hates thee, and will grant thee nothing, unless he sees some great advantage therein." Nevertheless Harald had the imprudence to go and trust himself in the power of William.

One day William turned the conversation upon his early intimacy with King Edward. "When Edward and I," he said, "lived like brothers under the same roof, he promised, that if ever he became king of England, he would make me heir to his kingdom."

And he obtained (no doubt, under some degree of constraint) a promise, and then by fraud and constraint together, an oath, made without Harald's knowledge over the relics of saints, that he would assist in obtaining the fulfilment of the promise of King Edward: a promise which Edward had clearly no right to make, even admitting in all its latitude the power of nominating a successor from their own family, enjoyed by the Danish and Anglo-Saxon kings of that time.

It was on the pretence of this fraudulently-obtained oath over the relics of pretended saints, that the Church of Rome, in accordance with its principles and uniform line of proceeding, aided, with all its unholy parade of the religious sanction, that large act of wholesale rapine and murder called the Conquest of England by the Normans: or rather the Conquest of England made under William the Norman, son of Robert le Diable, by all the confederated ruffians at that time in Europe. For it is observable that the Normans' invasion of England was not characterized by that feature which distinguished so much their other conquests, great enterprises accomplished by wonderfully small numbers. In the case of England, they took care to be superior in numbers as well as in arms and discipline. A memorable though mournful testimony to the energy and valour, under all disadvantages of disunion and inferior generalship, of the Anglo-Saxon race.

On the death of Edward, the English elected Harald their king; and the grandson of the herdsman Ulfnoth showed himself, say the historians, just, wise, affable, and active for the good of his country. As a general, however, he was evidently inferior to the son of Robert le Diable: had it been otherwise, his country might have had another fate. In answer to a messenger sent by William to remind him of his oath, the Saxon King replied: "It is true that I took an oath to William; but I took it under constraint. I promised what did not belong to me: a promise which I could not in any way perform. My royal authority is not my own; I could not lay it down against the will of the country; nor can I, against the will of the country, take a foreign wife?"—A noble and memorable answer! Peace be with the ashes of the herdsman's valiant grandson king! If he erred, he expiated his errors by forfeiting all that man can forfeit. He died like a brave man, fighting valiantly to the last, though in vain, for his lost country. It is an old story now. More than seven hundred years have passed away since the men who then acted and suffered, ceased to breathe; since their hearts ceased to beat with pride or with agony. But in what was then done and suffered, may still be heard a voice of warning to the present inhabitants of that soil where even the dust of those men's mouldered remains is no longer to be traced.

CHAPTER VIII.

“THE CHEAP DEFENCE OF NATIONS.”—THE
ANCIENT ENGLISH NATIONAL DEFENCES.

THE warning voice to which I have referred at the close of the last chapter, was not lost upon William of Normandy; who possessed, in an ample degree, the two essential qualities of great men, expressed in the word “statesman-soldier;”^{*} and who, to the character of an able military leader, united that of a cold, hard, far-sighted statesman. He, therefore, adopted the measures which appeared best calculated to prevent any foreign enemy from ever again finding the invasion of England the successful enterprise which it had proved to him and his followers. It may be admitted that he had acquired a very competent knowledge of the danger to be provided against, and the experience of six hundred years bears testimony to the wisdom of the provisions he devised against that danger.

The feudal law was at that time the prevailing

^{*} Οἷτινες ἀμφοτέρω ἀν δύνωνται, καὶ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ στρατηγεῖν.
—Isocrat. ad Philipp.

law of Europe. The part of that law which concerns us at present was, that those who hold the land of a country are bound to defend that country with their own swords, and not to employ the swords of mercenaries. One consequence of this was, that while the sword was in the hands of those military tenants, their country was secure against foreign invasion. Another consequence was, that they themselves were secure against unlimited power and oppression on the part of their chief or suzerain. Thus when, in process of time, the sword fell out of the hands of those barons, or military tenants, and the princes were allowed to raise armies of mercenaries to do the work formerly done by the barons, the princes became absolute throughout the greater part of Europe, and the barons lost their power, and even their liberty. In order to secure England against any future attempts from its warlike neighbours, the most obvious plan was to place the country on an equal footing with its neighbours in regard to the system of military tenures. The LII.* Law of William I. forms the foundation of the system by which this was accomplished.

In accordance with the law introduced by William, all the lands in the kingdom were divided into what were called knights' fees, in number above sixty thousand; and for every knight's fee a knight, or

* See the Law in Wright's *Tenures*, p. 65.

soldier (*miles*) was bound to attend the king in his wars with horse and arms for forty days in a year, according to Blackstone* and other authorities; † or, as there is reason to believe, for a longer time. By this means the kingdom was always provided with an army of upwards of sixty thousand men-at-arms: that is, horsemen, well mounted and armed. That this was the express condition on which they held their lands, appears from one of the laws of William (c. 58), which enacts “quod habeant et teneant se semper in armis et equis, ut decet et oportet: et quod semper sint prompti et parati ad servitium suum integrum nobis explendum et peragendum, cum opus adfuerit, secundum quod debent de feodis et teneamenti suis de jure nobis facere.”

I have said that there is reason to think that, though both Sir William Blackstone and Sir Martin Wright have stated that the time of service was limited to forty days in every year, the time was not so limited. Blackstone‡ cites as his authority for this statement “Writ for this purpose in Memorand. Scacch. 36, prefixed to Maynard’s *Year Book*, Edw. II.” On turning to this writ we do not find any mention whatever of the time being forty days. Blackstone further says, “If he held only half a knight’s fee, he was only bound to attend twenty days, and so in proportion;” and for this he cites

* 1 Bl. Com. 410; 2 Bl. Com. 62. † Wright’s *Tenures*, p. 140.

‡ 2 Bl. Com. 62.

“Litt. sect. 95.” And it may be here added that this passage of Littleton’s *Tenures* is the only authority of apparent weight cited by Sir Martin Wright* for the same statement. Now Littleton’s evidence on the subject is by no means conclusive, as will appear from his words, which are—“And also it is commonly said, that some held by the service of one knight’s fee, and some by the half of a knight’s fee. And *it is said*, that when the king makes a voyage royal into Scotland to subdue the Scots, then he which holdeth by the service of one knight’s fee ought to be with the king forty days, well and conveniently arrayed for the war; and he which holdeth his land by the moiety of a knight’s fee ought to be with the king twenty days; and he which holdeth his land by the fourth part of a knight’s fee ought to be with the king ten days; and so he that hath more, more, and he that hath less, less.” For this statement all the authority is, “it is said:” Livy’s authority *ferunt* for *bos locutus*, and the like prodigies. The whole scheme, in regard to the cutting down the time of service to twenty days, ten days, and less, is evidently quite unsuited to the practical logic of the Anglo-Norman statesmen-soldiers, who would have been unable to accomplish their object with an army liable to dwindle in this way.

In regard to the alleged time of forty days, a

* Wright’s *Tenures*, p. 140.

new light has been thrown on the subject by a modern constitutional lawyer. Mr. Toulmin Smith has shown that "every parish was required to furnish one foot soldier, equipped, and armed for *sixty* days."* Now, it is remarkable that the writs, on the authority of which Mr. Toulmin Smith has shown this, apply to the same point of time, and manifestly to the same occasion as the writ for men-at-arms referred to by Blackstone. The authorities cited by Mr. Smith are *Rolls of Parliament*, temp. Edw. II., Appendix No. 1, and *Id.*, Appendix No. 25; and the occasion was the preparation for that memorable "voyage royal into Scotland to subdue the Scots," which had its result in the battle of Bannockburn. Since the writ regarding the foot soldier from the parish was for sixty days, we may conclude that the writ regarding the man-at-arms or knight, in the absence of any specific mention of forty days in that writ, would be for the same length of time, namely, sixty days also.

Besides the advantage to the kingdom of its having by this means, without any expense, an army of upwards of sixty thousand effective men always ready, another mode in which this ancient constitutional machinery for the defence of the kingdom exercised a most beneficial influence, was by checking expensive wars; not only the great barons, but the

* *The Parish; its Obligations and Powers, &c.*, by Toulmin Smith, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law, p. 18, 2nd ed.

knights, and esquires, and freeholders refusing to follow the king into what they considered needless and expensive foreign wars. It was on such an occasion that Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, made that reply to King Edward I. which showed the high spirit and independence of the Anglo-Norman barons, so different from the titled courtiers of the Tudors and the Stuarts. "By the everlasting God, sir earl, you shall go or hang!" exclaimed the king. "By the everlasting God, sir king, I will neither go nor hang!" replied the baron.

The occasion here referred to was a requisition of the king to some of his barons and others to follow him in arms to Normandy, or contribute money aids thereto: "which the constable and marshal, and many of the nobility, and of the knights and esquires, and all the freeholders vehemently denied, unless it were so ordained and determined by common consent of parliament."* And, as they constituted a majority of the parliament, they would take care that it should not be so ordained. Very different indeed was the conduct of the parliaments of the eighteenth century, after the fatal change in the constitution. But for the powerful and salutary checks imposed by the ancient English constitution, Edward the First, with his love of war and rage for conquest, and, perhaps, still more, Edward the Third, would have ground down the nation with taxes and loaded it with debt.

* Coke, 2nd Inst., 532.

But this force of sixty thousand men-at-arms did not constitute the whole of the military defence of the kingdom. The Normans had owed their victory at Hastings, by which they obtained their footing in England, as much to the superiority of their archers as to the valour of their men-at-arms. From policy it might have been two or three generations before the Anglo-Norman government encouraged the use of the long-bow among the Saxons. It is evident, however, that in the time of Henry III. they had attained great proficiency in it. And by the time of the first and second Edwards, it formed, perhaps, the most effective part of an English or Anglo-Norman army. It appears that at the same time that the knight-service writs were issued, every parish in England was required to furnish at least one foot soldier equipped and armed for *sixty* days.* These foot soldiers formed those formidable archers beneath the shower of whose terrible cloth-yard shafts nothing could live.

The excellence attained by the English in the use of the long-bow, was the effect of great and incessant practice. They commenced this education when they were children of six† years of age. They were first made to practise with a small bow

* The reference to these writs will be found in Mr. Toulmin Smith's *Parish*, p. 18, 2nd ed.

† The words of the statute 3 Henry VIII. c. 3, which refers back to the statute of Winchester (A. D. 1285), are—"every man-child from six years old."

suited to their size and strength, which was every year exchanged for one larger and stronger, till they were able to draw that of a full-grown man. The archers of England were thus not only rendered by constant practice extremely dexterous and good marksmen, but by being taught to draw the bow-string to the ear, while those of other European nations only drew it to the breast, they could use a much longer and, therefore, much more formidable arrow. The result was that the English archers were the best and most formidable ever known in war. On many occasions the strongest and finest armour was found quite unable to resist these arrows.

The battles of Falkirk, of Halidon Hill, of Homildon, of Cressy, of Agincourt, were won chiefly, some of them solely, by the archers. According to Walsingham, the armour worn by the Earl of Douglas at the battle of Homildon was of the most exquisite workmanship and temper, and cost the artisan who made it three years' labour; yet the Earl was wounded in five places. The fact is, that those English archers who learnt their craft as free-men and citizens, not as the creatures of a drill-sergeant, were far more formidable than the match-lock-men and musketeers who succeeded them: at least till the introduction of the bayonet in its improved form; for there was long a tendency to entertain an exaggerated notion of the superiority

of fire-arms, whereas most of the hard work that fell to the share of the infantry in the seventeenth century was done by the pikemen. Gustavus Adolphus, indeed, made some improvement in the use of the musket which rendered it more serviceable; but his improvements were not generally adopted throughout Europe till nearly a century after.

The various parish records throughout England furnish abundant evidence of the constant use of manly games and athletic exercises in all the parishes of England. Mr. Toulmin Smith, in his very valuable and learned work, *The Parish*, says, "It was formerly the custom that every parish should provide a public place for healthy and useful exercises; and the 'Parish Butts' were required to be everywhere kept up, under heavy penalties." In his work above referred to will be found entries from the churchwardens' accounts for "sheses of arrows," for "bowstrings," for "felling trees for the butts, and cutting them out." And presentments are often found made against parishes for having the butts in a ruinous state. Mr. Smith says, "In vestry minutes, the repair of the butts is a frequent order."* I well remember that a piece of ground in a town where I lived when a boy, was called "The Butts." Similar names may still be found in many towns and country parishes, designating the places anciently appropriated to the ex-

* *The Parish*, p. 520, note, 2nd ed.

ercise of the youth in archery. The London artillery ground is a place of this kind; and so are Newington Butts and Brentford Butts.

In some of the old English writers we meet with very interesting evidence of the care with which the ancient English institutions provided for the keeping up of these exercises. Thus in Aubrey's *Wiltshire* it is said, "In every parish is a Church-house, to which belonged utensils for dressing provisions. Here the householders met and were merry and gave their charity. The young people were there too, and had dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, etc.; the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on."*

This picture of the youth of England on a summer evening, shooting at the butts on the village green, the village maidens dancing and "the ancients sitting gravely by and looking on," exhibiting, as it does to the life, the mode in which were formed the hardy soldiers whose unerring cloth-yard shafts won so many battles, forms a strange and striking contrast with the mode in which the Prussian troops of Frederick II., Adam Smith's model of standing armies, were taught their "expertness in their exercise:" miserably fed, clothed, and sheltered, and

* This extract is from a note in Mr. Toulmin Smith's *Parish*, p. 496, 2nd ed. See also an extract from Chauncy's *Hertfordshire*, in the same note, p. 497, as to the extent of land near the church anciently granted for the recreation of the youth of the parish.

barbarously treated; a heavy cane descending on their shoulders without mercy, if two or three were seen talking together, to disperse them and prevent their plotting. A line of sergeants, each armed with a heavy cane, was planted behind each rank in action, one for every three soldiers, to prevent their running away; forming a strong contrast with the mode of warfare of free men defending a country and laws which gave them things worth fighting for.

Every parish in England had also to keep a certain quantity of armour, which was periodically viewed by the justices. In country places this armour was kept in the church for security; and hence in the parish records we find it sometimes called the "church armour," or "church harness."* The parish records also prove that this armour was kept not for show, but for use; each parish forming a link of the great chain which constituted the military strength of the nation.†

If England, then, wishes to preserve her place among the nations, her course is clear. It is to revive her old healthy institutions, with the necessary modifications. It is for that purpose more than important, it is essential, to have in every parish in England the target-practice with the rifle carried on, with the same steady perseverance and the same successful results that the ancient practice of shoot-

* *The Parish*, p. 518.

† *Ibid.* p. 523; see also *ib.* p. 18.

ing at the butts with the English long-bow was cultivated for so many ages. With such an institution, permanent not temporary, what nation in the world would consider it a promising speculation to invade England?

Here one thing seems of great importance, that while the English rifleman would be trained to kill an enemy at a much greater distance than the English archer could, he should be provided with a bayonet, and specially taught the use of it. To teach a large majority of Englishmen to view themselves as only charged with the single function of killing an enemy, without fail, at 600 yards or so, would be to reduce them to the condition of Bobadil; or of the courtier, perfumed like a milliner, and talking like a waiting-gentlewoman, who came to Hotspur when the fight was done to demand his prisoners, and said, that "but for those vile guns he would himself have been a soldier." No: the riflemen of England now will have this vast advantage over the archers or musketeers of former days, that they will, if justice be done to them, unite far more than the ancient archers' power of dealing death at a distance, with a power of facing it advantageously however close at hand, not inferior to that of Cromwell's pikemen. Men armed so as to feel no confidence in being able to resist either a bayonet charge or a charge of cavalry, would want the primary military essentials.

In addition to his bow and arrows, his billhook, hatchet, or hammer, every archer carried a long stake sharpened at the bottom and tipped with iron at the top, which he fixed obliquely before him in the ground. These stakes formed together a sort of *chevaux de frise*. At Agincourt the English archers, instead of wearing steel armour, even threw aside their leathern jackets, that they might have a freer use of their arms. What with the defence of the stakes and the incessant flight of arrows, though the French were to the English at the most moderate computation as six to one, very few of the French lances reached the English archers. Only three horsemen penetrated beyond the stakes and they were instantly slain: every arrow told either upon the horses or their riders. The Frenchmen thus thrown into complete disorder, the English archers then left their stakes, and slinging their bows behind them, rushed with their billhooks and hatchets into the midst of the steel-clad knights; they themselves being almost without clothing, and many of them bare-footed and bare-headed. At Bannockburn the English archers seem to have been unprovided with these stakes. The riflemen's bayonets, of which they would be taught the use, would fully answer the purpose of the stakes of the archers.

Every parish in England had, as has been shown, a piece of ground set apart for the practice of the

bow, as well as for other athletic games and exercises; and every parish in England ought now to have a cricket-ground and a rifle-ground. These things are as much a part of the ancient English constitution (which is not yet, I think, totally destroyed) as the vestry for the deliberative meeting of the parish, the town-hall for that of the borough, and the parliament for that of the nation. Men who have learned to shoot with the bow at the same parish butts, or with the rifle at the same parish target, will not only feel a confidence in each other—a confidence the effect of which might, before the depopulation of the Highlands, have been seen in the Highland regiments, when the words “Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder!” was a spell of power; but they will also possess that patriotic spirit which prompts men readily to risk life in the defence of all that which makes life sweet. This was signally exemplified in the great English constitutional wars of the seventeenth century. Cromwell’s troop of Sloop Dragoons, the primary element of his famous Ironsides, was composed of men who had worked together as labourers on the same farm; and his Huntingdon regiment of horse, of freeholders and farmers who had been neighbours all their lives, and felt that confidence in each other which a thorough knowledge of each others’ character naturally inspired. The result was well described in the words of their commander; of him who raised, and trained,

and led them: "Truly, they were never beaten, and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually."

It may be added here, with regard to athletic exercises, that Cromwell, when at Cambridge, distinguished himself far more at football and cudgels than at the exercises of the schools; and that he, like Marlborough, Clive, and many other great men, would never have risen to the command of armies, if such rise had depended upon a competitive examination, in which prigs and pedants will generally beat men of great force of character or genius for the arts of war or peace.

Down to the middle of the sixteenth century: that is, while the old system of national defence lasted in England—a system uniting the advantages of the military tenures with the English superiority in the use of the bow—I do not believe it could be shown that Frenchmen dared to talk of the invasion of England in the way they have talked of it of late years. Of many recent instances of this insolence, one may be adduced, as it is reported on good authority.

At a public meeting on the subject of Volunteer Rifle corps, held at Honiton, Devonshire, on the 11th June, 1859, the Right Hon. Sir J. Coleridge, according to the report in *The Times* of June 15, 1859, said he travelled from Turin in a French diligence at the time when Napoleon was at Elba.

Among the company was a French colonel on half-pay, with whom he entered into conversation. The colonel said: "It is all very well for you to talk; but it is nothing but the Channel that has saved you. We should have been upon you but for that, and then all resistance would have been at an end." This reminds one of the fanatical insolence of the Turk in the day of his power and his pride, when he spoke of the Christians as little better than sheep. It surely should be the first duty of Englishmen to take care that the French colonel proves a false prophet, and to remember that a nation, however brave, if totally unaccustomed to the use of arms, may be slaughtered like sheep. Sir J. Coleridge said in reply: "Well, but you know the Channel is just as open to you as it is to us. Why don't you cross the Channel?" The answer was, "You may prevent us."

Sir J. Coleridge then referred to the time when England, without its present great wealth, without its colonies, and without Scotland and Ireland, had maintained its position against the House of Austria and the kingdom of France, by the stout hearts of the English people and their constant and familiar practice with the bow. "It was part of the law of the land," said Sir J. Coleridge, "that in every parish two butts should be set up, and the population were obliged to turn out and practise the use of the long bow. It was this that made the English

the most effective force with the bow in the world; and the English yeomen and archers to be respected all over the world." Let what, then, was true of the bowmen of the olden time, be true of the riflemen now. Let them be familiar with the use of the rifle, and then there can be no reason why they should not stand in the same situation as their forefathers in the days long past.

In regard to the machinery for carrying out the substitution of rifle target practice for the old shooting at the parish butts, the parish records of England point out the course to be pursued. It appears from those records, that every parish was bound to furnish butts and a certain supply of bows and arrows. So now every parish should be bound by law to supply a certain number of rifles. From the extent of ground requisite, every parish will not be able to have a rifle target: at least in large towns. But one thing is evident, that if this institution is to be *permanent*—and otherwise it will be of no use—we cannot trust for its permanency to rifle-clubs or to voluntary subscription. The institution must be made a part of those public duties of which the law enforces the strict, and regular, and unremitted performance, for the common well-being and safety of the whole nation.

Of late years a doctrine has grown up that it is more conducive to the production of wealth, for the mass of a nation, at least when it has reached a

certain point of civilization, altogether to throw aside the use of arms, and give up the business of national defence entirely to a class of men who adopt the use of arms as a distinct profession. In some cases this business has been committed in a considerable degree to foreigners, so that the nation, if rich, is pretty much in the situation of a large flock of fat sheep which has been committed to the keeping of a pack of wolves, and can only exist subject to the condition of being constantly preyed on by its own hired wolves, and with the prospect of being totally destroyed as soon as some other beasts of prey overpower its defenders. The people of Rome lived in this condition from the time they trusted to mercenary standing armies; the people of France at the period treated of by Fortescue; and to this state of degradation, the once great English people were all but reduced during a considerable part of the last century, when they were heavily taxed under the pretence of paying foreign mercenaries to defend them: though, even at that time, any one average Englishman would have been able to thrash any two of those foreign mercenaries.

The constitutional armed force of England, whether that force be called militia or trained bands, is, and has been for more than a thousand years, composed of the freemen of every county; bound by the common law to be trained to the use of arms; not compellable to go beyond the limits of their

counties, unless in case of invasion; and never, except by consent, compellable to go abroad. The sheriff of each county, elective by the freemen at common law, is, by the common law, the leader of the militia or trained bands of each shire. The effect of this great constitutional principle, that the freemen constituting the defensive force were not compellable to go abroad, in checking expensive foreign wars, was shown in one remarkable instance, in which King Edward the First was obliged to abandon a favourite scheme of a foreign war because the freeholders refused to comply with his requisition. And the grand results of the same constitutional principle, together with that of the principle of tenure, which made the expense of wars fall chiefly on the landholders, and therefore rendered them averse to needless wars, signally appears in the fact that the enormous taxation of the people of England, the national debt, and standing armies began at the same time.

To render still clearer the efficiency of the constitutional military system of England, I will give here a notable example. Towards the beginning of the reign of Charles the First, the coasts and ports being unguarded, and the general defences of the nation being in as bad a condition as unbounded folly accompanied by unbounded presumption could reduce them to, the king held at Whitehall a grand council, to which Sir Robert Cotton, the great constitutional

antiquary and historian, was called, and his advice asked. In the course of his speech to the council, Sir Robert Cotton said: "For the land forces, if it were for an offensive war, the men of less livelihood were the best spared, and were used formerly to make such war: but, for safety of a commonwealth, the wisdom of all times did never intrust the public cause to any other than such as had a portion in the public adventure. And this we saw in 1588" [the year of the Spanish Armada], "when the care of the queen and council did make the body of that large army no other than of trained bands, which with the auxiliaries of the whole realm amounted to no less than thirty-four thousand. Neither were any of those drawn out of their counties and proper habitations before the end of May, that they might be no long grievance to the public."* After saying that "for the support of the king's ordinary charge, the lands of the crown were settled unalterably, and called 'sacrum patrimonium principis,'" he adds: "From hence it is like there will be no great labour or stiffness to incline his majesty to an act of resumption" [of the crown lands], "since such desires of the State have found an easy way in the will of all the princes from Henry III. to the last."† The amount of the constitutional force here stated to have been raised on such an occasion as the defence of the kingdom against the Spanish Armada, shows what a falling off

* *Parl. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 214.

† *Ibid.* p. 216.

had taken place in the military capabilities of the kingdom since the military tenants had sought to evade the conditions on which they held their lands. Nearly three hundred years before, when England was less populous, Edward I. and his son raised armies of one hundred thousand men.

But as the most elaborate attempts have been made to prove the superior efficiency in every respect of standing armies over militias, it will be necessary to examine somewhat minutely the arguments brought forward, and to sift and test the so-called facts on which those arguments profess to be founded. And at the commencement of this particular inquiry, it may be remarked as singular, that the efficiency of a militia in England, even at a time when the English government for its own purposes was exerting itself to the utmost to bring that ancient and often tried constitutional force into disrepute, was signally exhibited against the power of Louis XIV., a king who kept on foot one of the most powerful standing armies known in the history of the world, down to the time of Napoleon I. Such a fact as that about to be mentioned may most truly be cited as a most instructive example of the "cheap defence of nations."

David Hume, with that agreeable ingenuousness which he displays occasionally, thus describes the condition of the militia in England during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. "The militia fell

much to decay during these two reigns, partly by the policy of the kings, who had entertained a diffidence of their subjects, partly by that ill-judged law which limited the king's power of mustering and arraying them." Adam Smith's speculations on the subject of militias and standing armies would probably have been more valuable than they are, if he had in general entertained a little more "diffidence" than he appears to have done of his friend David Hume's version of historical facts, or even if he had duly weighed the conclusion of the paragraph which contains the sentence above quoted. "In the beginning, however, of Charles's reign, the militia was still deemed formidable. De Witt having proposed to the French king an invasion of England during the first Dutch war, that monarch replied, that such an attempt would be entirely fruitless, and would tend only to unite the English. "In a few days," said he, "after our landing, there will be fifty thousand men at least upon us."* According, therefore, to this authority, so late as 1666, the most

* Hume's *Hist. of England*, ch. 71, cites D'Estrades, 20th October, 1666. Hume's quotation is not, however, correct; he does not appear to have consulted the original authority. A reference to D'Estrades' *Despatches* strengthens the force of the opinion given, which will be seen to have been that of D'Estrades himself, the result of his own observation of the English character and institutions, and not that of the king, who could have made no observations of his own, and whose opinion could therefore have been only second-hand. The following are the words of D'Estrades:—"Il me proposa ensuite l'attaque de l'Isle de Wight ou celle de

powerful king of his time was deterred from an invasion of England by his estimate of the formidable power of the English militia. Facts like these appear to have been totally overlooked in the argument of those who contend that the circumstances of Europe compel England to keep up a standing army for defence against invasion.

Adam Smith, in support of his position that a well-regulated standing army is superior to every militia, cites the superiority of the Macedonian armies under Philip and Alexander, of the Carthaginian armies under Hannibal, and of the Prussian under Frederick. Now in all those cases, the superiority was due to the genius of the commanders; for the troops of none of these nations were particularly remarkable for excellence at other times. Indeed, Hannibal borrowed improvements from the arms of that Roman militia, for he changed the long lances and small shields of his infantry for the long shield and stabbing sword of the Roman soldier. In cavalry, indeed, both light and heavy, Hannibal's

quelque place en Angleterre. Je lui dis, que je trouvois beaucoup de difficultez à faire des descentes; et que, quand elles réussiroient, j'en trouvois encore davantage à les soutenir, et à donner la subsistance et les secours necessaires aux troupes qui seroient dans l'action; autre que, selon la connoissance que j'avois de l'humeur et des inclinations des Anglais, ce seroit un moyen de réunir tous les parties opposez au roi d'Angleterre, quand ils verroient qu'une armée de votre Majesté auroient mis pied à terre dans leur pais; que je suis certain qu'en peu de temps ils auront cinquante mille hommes sous les armes."

army was decidedly superior to the Roman. But the Romans were never very strong in cavalry.

It is a great advantage to a nation to have a great general at the head of its armies. But the question is, how to obtain such institutions for a nation as shall secure to it a constant supply (not of generals of vast genius like Hannibal, for that is impossible), but of men and officers equal to the business of defending their country in all emergencies. Now this was the case with Rome in the earlier period of her history. When individuals were restricted by law to a small portion of land, and the owners cultivated their farms with their own hands, the republic could always command an abundant supply of hardy soldiers. It is not true that these men were inferior as soldiers to the mercenaries of Hannibal, though the latter were no doubt skilfully selected and admirably trained; for the Romans did not yield or run away, but were overpowered and slaughtered by Hannibal's unequalled genius for war. It would therefore be a most incorrect conclusion that a standing army of base mercenaries generally would be superior to a militia, whether of Romans or of Englishmen, fighting for the independence of their country. It is true that, as Adam Smith says, the armies of Carthage had the advantage of being disciplined and led by three great generals who succeeded one another in the command, Hamilcar, his son-in-law Hasdrubal, and his son Hannibal. But

Carthage still wanted the materials out of which the best soldiers are made, a native agricultural population, living, as Bacon says, "in convenient plenty, and no servile condition," but not in luxury. And for the solution of the question it is necessary to go somewhat deeper.

The whole of Adam Smith's argument for the superiority of standing armies over militias proceeds on the assumption that the bulk of the population of every civilized country must consist of sheep with a pack of wolves to defend them. In such a state of things it is manifest that the lives and properties of the sheep must enjoy but small security, either against their own, or against foreign wolves. Adam Smith professes to ground his conclusion on a series of historical facts, which I will now examine.

In former chapters I have shown the fallacy of Adam Smith's mode of accounting for the fall of the Greeks and Carthaginians by what he calls the irresistible superiority of a standing army over a militia. "Thus," he says, the army of Philip of Macedon vanquished "the gallant and well-exercised militias of the principal republics of ancient Greece."* An apparently very conclusive fact against militias, if a fact it were. But the fact was exactly the reverse, and Adam Smith had so stated it only about ten pages before, where he has the following words:—"After the second Persian war the armies' of

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i.

Athens seem to have been generally composed of mercenary troops, consisting, indeed, partly of citizens, but partly too of foreigners.* This was the real cause of the success of Philip. The “gallant and well-exercised militias of ancient Greece” were not subdued by Philip’s standing army. But Philip was victorious because there no longer existed either the gallant militia, or a Militiades, a Themistocles, or an Epaminondas to lead them.

I have also shown, in the chapter on the Romans, that the fall of Carthage was not owing to the superiority of a standing army over a militia, but to the fact that Carthage possessed no materials out of which to construct a good native militia.

Among the causes which, according to Adam Smith, contributed to relax the discipline of the

* Adam Smith does not cite any authority in support of this statement; but besides many other authorities he might have cited the authority of Thucydides, who represents the ambassadors from Corinth saying at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war,—
 “Δάνεισμα γὰρ ποιησάμενοι, ὑπολαβεῖν οἷοι τ’ ἐσμὲν μισθῷ μείζονι τοὺς ξένους αὐτῶν ναυδάτας. ὠνητὴ γὰρ Ἀθηναίων ἡ δύναμις μᾶλλον ἢ οἰκεία· ἡ δὲ ἡμετέρα ἥσσουν ἂν τοῦτο πάθει, τοῖς σώμασι τοπλέον ἰσχύουσα ἢ τοῖς χρήμασι. μὴ τε νίκη ναυμαχίας κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ἀλίσκονται.”—*Thuc.* i. 121. It is observable that this passage contains in substance two of Lord Bacon’s maxims:—1. That “money is not the sinews of war where the sinews of men’s arms are failing.” And 2. That “there be many examples where sea-fights have been final to the war.” The fact of the almost universal use of mercenary troops by the Athenians during the century before the battle of Chæronea, is proved by Plato, by Xenophon, and by almost every page of the public orations of Demosthenes.

Roman armies, was the dispersion of them in small bodies through the different provincial towns; from which they were scarce ever removed, but when it became necessary to repel an invasion. "Small bodies of soldiers," he says, "quartered in trading and manufacturing towns, and seldom removed from those quarters, became themselves tradesmen, artificers, and manufacturers. The civil came to predominate over the military character; and the standing armies of Rome gradually degenerated into a corrupt, neglected, and undisciplined militia."

Now, so far from the fact of soldiers being tradesmen and artificers rendering them bad soldiers, the best soldiers that the world ever saw united the character of soldiers with that of good and industrious tradesmen and artificers. The statement of Whitelock, that at the commencement of the civil war between Charles I. and the Parliament, Cromwell "had a brave regiment of horse, most of them freeholders and freeholders' sons," seems to lead to the inference that the bulk of the Ironsides were composed of the agricultural class. However, the expression of Denzil Hollis, that "most of the colonels and officers were mean tradesmen, brewers, tailors, goldsmiths, shoemakers, and the like: a notable dunghill, if one would rake into it, to find out their several pedigrees,"* as well as the known facts,

* *Memoirs of Denzil Lord Hollis from the Year 1641 to 1648.* London, 1699, p. 149.

prove that there were many tradesmen or artisans among Cromwell's troops.

In regard to the composition of the parliamentary army as modelled by Cromwell, we have the authority of Samuel Pepys to the same effect. Under date November 9, 1663, Pepys thus writes in his diary: "Of all the old army now you cannot see a man begging about the streets; but what? You shall have this captain turned a shoemaker; the lieutenant, a baker; this a brewer; that a haberdasher; this common soldier, a porter; and every man in his apron and frock, &c., as if they never had done anything else: whereas the other" (those who had belonged to the king's army) "go with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing, and stealing;* running into people's houses by force, oftentimes to carry away something; and this is the difference between the temper of one and the other."† Pepys, in many other places of his diary, always speaks of these parliamentary soldiers as the men that "must do the king's business," and not those who composed his standing army. Under date June 24, 1663, he cites Mr. Coventry as saying: "In the sea service it is impossible to do anything without them, there being not more than three men of the whole king's side that are fit to command almost."

* A notable example of this may be seen in the trial of Colonel James Turner and others, at the Old Bailey, for felony and burglary, in 1664.

† Pepys' *Diary*, November 9, 1663.

Such were the men whom Cromwell betrayed and Monk sold. It is the more important to note this, because Adam Smith has stated, as one of his *facts*, that "the standing army of Cromwell turned the Long Parliament out of doors;" in which statement there are two unwarranted assumptions: (1,) That the parliamentary army had the character of a standing army, and not of a militia; and (2,) That the overthrow of the parliament was the effect of the character of the citizen being in Cromwell's soldiers altogether merged in that of the mercenary soldier. Whereas the fact was that, down to the battle of Worcester, the parliamentary army retained the distinct character of a militia: of free men fighting for their religion, laws, and liberties. After the battle of Worcester, Cromwell weeded out of it as many as possible of those who, he knew, would oppose his designs. But even then he could only attain his purpose of destroying the parliament, and setting himself up in its place, by deceiving many of the best officers, such as Harrison, by an elaborate tissue of cant, hypocrisy, and falsehood.

The argument, therefore, of Adam Smith in favour of standing armies over militias, drawn from the army of the Long Parliament of England, falls to the ground. Even if it should be proved to have assumed the character of a standing army after the battle of Worcester, it unquestionably did all its work, and performed all its wonderful achievements

in the character of a militia ; while the army of the king, being composed in part of men and more of officers, trained in foreign service, possessed far more of the character of a standing army.

The manner in which the newly-raised London apprentices distinguished themselves at the first battle of Newbury is well known, and has been admitted by their enemies. And although they do not appear to have displayed at Naseby an altogether equal degree of steadiness, there are some remarks of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun respecting them which are well deserving of attention.

“ The battle of Naseby,” he says, “ is generally thought to have been the deciding action of the late civil war. The number of forces was equal on both sides, nor was there any advantage in the ground, or extraordinary accident that happened during the fight, which could be of considerable importance to either. In the army of the parliament, nine only of the officers had served abroad, and most of the soldiers were prentices drawn out of London but two months before. In the king’s army there were above a thousand officers that had served in foreign parts : yet was that army routed and broken by those new-raised prentices, who were observed to be obedient to command, and brave in fight, not only in that action, but in all occasions during that active campaign. The people of these nations are not a dastardly crew, like those born in misery, under

oppression and slavery, who must have time to rub off that fear, cowardice, and stupidity which they bring from home. And the officers seem to stand in more need of experience than private soldiers; yet in that battle it was seen that the sobriety and principle of the officers on the one side prevailed over the experience of those on the other."*

Fletcher also brings forward in support of his views the actions of the Marquis of Montrose, which he compares with those of Cæsar, "as well for the military skill as the bad tendency of them: though," he adds, "the marquis had never served abroad, nor seen any action before the six victories which, with numbers much inferior to those of his enemies, he obtained in one year; and the most considerable of them were chiefly gained by the assistance of the tenants and vassals of the family of Gordon."†

Among his arguments in favour of standing armies in modern times, Adam Smith enumerates the greater difficulty of preserving any considerable degree of order and prompt obedience from the noise of firearms, the smoke, and the invisible death to which every man feels himself every moment exposed, as soon as he comes within cannon-shot, and frequently a long time before the battle can be well said to be engaged. "In

* *Discourse of Government with relation to Militias*, pp. 43, 44. Edinburgh, 1698.

† *Ibid.* pp. 42, 43.

an ancient battle," he says, "there was no noise but what arose from the human voice; there was no smoke, there was no invisible cause of wounds or death. Every man, till some mortal weapon actually did approach him, saw clearly that no such weapon was near him."

It is not unworthy of remark that Hobbes endeavours to account for the courage of the London apprentices in the civil wars, on a principle the reverse of this—namely, the invisible nature of the death. "Among theirs"—that is, the parliament's soldiers—"there were," he says, "a great many London apprentices, who, for want of experience in the war, would have been fearful enough of death and wounds approaching visibly in glistening swords; but for want of judgment, scarce thought of such death as comes invisibly in a bullet, and, therefore, were very hardly to be driven out of the field."*

The want of judgment here imputed by Hobbes to the London apprentices, would seem to be very much of the same nature as the stupidity sometimes imputed to the English in later times by their enemies, which prevents them from discovering that they have been beaten, and also prevents them from taking to flight as a natural consequence of defeat. But men can very well afford to bear with patience and resignation the imputation of this sort of "want of judgment."

* *Behemoth*, p. 188. London, 1682.

I have thus attempted to answer some of Adam Smith's arguments against militias as compared with standing armies. It may be added that when Adam Smith contends, that "to maintain, even in tolerable execution, the complex regulations of any modern militia, requires the continual and painful attention of government, without which they are constantly falling into total neglect and disuse,"* he shows that he was totally unacquainted both with the principles and the practice of the constitutional militia system of England. And when he affirms "that the ancient institutions of Greece and Rome seem to have been much more effectual for maintaining the martial spirit of the great body of the people than the establishment of what are called the militias of modern times;" that they were much more simple, and their influence much more universal, since by means of them the whole body of the people was completely instructed in the use of arms, "whereas it is but a very small part of them who can ever be so instructed by the regulations of any modern militia;" he ought to have defined within what limits he uses the term "modern militia," since, if he applies the term generally to what are commonly called modern times in contradistinction to the times in which Greece and Rome flourished, he appears to have overlooked some important facts in modern history.

Does he mean to include in what he describes as

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i. part iii. article ii.

“the complex regulations of modern militias,” which are constantly apt “to fall into total neglect and dis-use,” the institution or regulation by which England, during five hundred years, won so many great battles: the institution by which all Englishmen of the class of yeomen or small freeholders were trained to the use of the bow?

Adam Smith also says, that in all the different republics of ancient Greece, to learn his military exercises was a necessary part of education imposed by the State upon every free citizen; that in every city there seems to have been a public field, in which, under the protection of the public magistrate, the young people were taught their different exercises by different masters: in which very simple institution consisted the whole expense which any Grecian State seems ever to have been at in preparing its citizens for war; that, in ancient Rome, the exercises of the Campus Martius answered the same purpose; whereas “under the feudal governments, the many public ordinances that the citizens of every district should practise archery as well as several other military exercises, were intended for promoting the same purpose, but appear to have been universally neglected.”*

The complete inaccuracy of this statement has been abundantly shown as regards England; where, in point of fact, the young people were taught

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i.

archery and other military exercises in every parish with as much care, and, I may add, with as much success, as they were taught in every city throughout the different republics of ancient Greece. Adam Smith appears to have fallen into this error from a hasty and very imperfect generalization in this particular case. In the Scottish historians, frequent mention is made of the failure of the repeated ordinances respecting the practice of archery in Scotland to accomplish their object; which ordinances, "either from want of interest in the officers entrusted with the execution of them, or from some other cause, appear to have been universally neglected." Those words, which Adam Smith applies generally, do in part apply to Scotland in the matter of archery; but to England not at all.*

* The following note, which I transcribe from Mr. Toulmin Smith's *Parish*, pp. 519, 520, 2nd edition, will show on unquestionable authority the inaccuracy of Adam Smith's conclusions:—"The 'arrows' and 'butts' named in these parish accounts formed part of that system of accustoming all the people to the active use of arms and healthy recreation, which was the wise policy of the common law. In the extract already given from Aubrey, it has been seen that shooting at the butts was a usual part of the holiday exercises. Every parish in the land is bound by law to have its butts, to be thus used for the wholesome recreation of the inhabitants. This, which was the ancient law, was re-declared by 3 Hen. VIII. c. 3, and 33 Hen. VIII. c. 9. It was one of the regular articles of periodical inquiry, 'If the inhabitants of the town (parish) have made and continued their butts, as they ought to do?' (See Lumbard's *Eirenarcha*, p. 481); 'and if they exercise themselves with long bows in shooting at the same, and elsewhere, on the holidays and other times convenient?' (*Boke for a Justyce*, p. 24, b). The reader will remember how at the siege of the castle in

Adam Smith, or somebody else, remarks somewhere that the effect of not making war a distinct profession, but making all men soldiers for a time, but none permanently, is, to make six bad or indifferent soldiers and to spoil six good ploughmen; whereas the effect of the contrary course is, that you have five good ploughmen and one good soldier. On the other hand, it is held by Blackstone,* who cites Montesquieu in support of his opinion, that "to prevent the executive power from being able to oppress, it is requisite that the armies with which it is entrusted should consist of the people, and have the same spirit with the people; as was the case at Rome, till Marius new-modelled the legions by enlisting the rabble of Italy, and laid the foundation of all the military tyranny that ensued. Nothing, then, according to these principles, ought to be more guarded against in a free State, than making the military power, when such a one is necessary to be kept on foot, a body too distinct from the people. Like ours, therefore, it should wholly be composed of natural subjects; it ought only to be enlisted for a short and limited time; the soldiers also should live intermixed with the people; no separate camp, no barracks, no inland fortresses, should be allowed.

Ivanhoe, Walter Scott, true to popular habits, and therefore using natural similes, makes 'the men complain that they can nowhere show themselves, but they are the mark for as many arrows as a parish butt on a holiday even.'"

* 1 Com. 414.

And perhaps it might be still better, if, by dismissing a stated number and enlisting others at every renewal of their term, a circulation could be kept up between the army and the people, and the citizen and the soldier be more intimately connected together."

In this argument of Blackstone, however, it is this very "circulation" that is the objectionable element, according to the argument which I have cited above,—I think it is Adam Smith's—and also according to the arguments of some recent writers, drawn from what they have observed in some continental nations, particularly Prussia: when they say that taking men away from their business for three years, and making them live together in regiments and in barracks, has a most prejudicial effect on their habits, and a pernicious influence on their future life. Now Blackstone indeed says "there should be no barracks, no separate camp; the soldiers should live intermixed with the people." It is probable that when the learned and accomplished commentator on the laws of England came to the execution of his proposed plan in all its details, he might have met with some difficulties in carrying out this part of it.

But the argument that there is no choice between a standing army and such a militia as shall spoil six ploughmen without making one good soldier out of them, is fallacious. We have seen that, in the case of the army of the Long Parliament of England, the men, while they were good soldiers, were not spoiled

either as ploughmen or artisans; and, under the old English institutions by which the youth were exercised with the bow, and latterly with the “fusee,” we may challenge any one to prove that a ploughman would be a worse ploughman for being, like Cuddie Headrigg, a first-rate marksman: which is all that is required.

The Government of Great Britain has the means of having half a million of riflemen that would make the name of England as formidable now as her archers did at “Cressy fell and red Poitiers,” and many another hard-fought field. But, in fact, to borrow the words of Fletcher of Saltoun, those who “aimed at absolute power, thinking they could never use it effectually to that end, unless it were wielded by mercenaries, and men that had no other interest in the commonwealth than their pay, have still endeavoured by all means to discredit militias, and render them burdensome to the people, by never suffering them to be upon any right or so much as tolerable foot;—and all to persuade the necessity of a standing force.”*

In 1732, Mr. Pulteney said in Parliament, and his words may perhaps be found to be as true now as they were 126 years ago,—“By means of their standing armies the nations around us have every one lost their liberties; it is, indeed, impossible that

* *A Discourse of Government with relation to Militias*, p. 8. Edinburgh, 1698.

the liberties of the people can be preserved in any country where a numerous standing army is kept up."*

In some at least of the countries of which Mr. Pulteney here speaks, the liberties could not be said to be very extensively distributed. But there is no question that in all countries but England, the feudal aristocracy, by turning the military service of their vassals into money, in order to support their costly luxuries in houses, clothes, furniture, and equipage, lost their independence. For, the feudal armies having ceased to exist, the sword thus fell out of the hands of the barons. To provide a substitute for the feudal militia in the defence of the various countries where this change had taken place, princes raised armies of mercenaries, and for their maintenance levied large sums upon the "people grown rich," says Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun,† "by trade, and dispirited for want of military exercise. Such forces," continues Fletcher, "were at first only raised for present exigencies, and continued no longer on foot than the occasions lasted. But princes soon found pretences to make them perpetual. The officers and soldiers of these mercenary armies depending for their subsistence and preferment as immediately upon the prince as the former

* *Parl. Hist.* viii. 904.

† *A Discourse of Government with relation to Militias.* Edinburgh, 1698.

militias did upon the barons, the power of the sword was transferred from the subject to the king, and war grew a constant trade to live by. Nay, many of the barons themselves being reduced to poverty by their expensive way of living, took commands in those mercenary troops; and being still continued hereditary members of diets and other assemblies of State, after the loss of their vassals whom they formerly represented, they were now the readiest of all others to load the people with heavy taxes, which were employed to increase the prince's military power, by guards, armies, and citadels beyond bounds or remedy."

While these observations applied to most of the countries in Europe, they did not altogether apply to England; where, though, as Fletcher remarks, the power of the barons had ceased, yet, at the time he wrote, no mercenary troops were yet established. "King Charles the First did indeed," says Fletcher, "endeavour to make himself absolute, though somewhat preposterously, for he attempted to seize the purse before he was master of the sword." What was peculiar in the fate of England was, that the power of the feudal barons did not, as in most of the other countries of Europe, all pass into the hands of the kings; but those who had succeeded to the land tenures of the feudal aristocracy, and who formed an oligarchy as opposed to an aristocracy, obtained possession of a large portion of it.

What use they have made of it I will endeavour to show in the next chapter. In the meantime I will sum up what I have here said, in the words of a military friend who has not only studied Jomini but seen actual war.

"The English archers, citizens and pure volunteers as they were, were unrivalled in skill. How is it now with regard to English horsemen? Certain portions of the nation choose to cultivate horsemanship, and turn out horsemen such as all the military schools of Europe are unable to equal. The man who does a thing every day of his life must do it better than the man who does it occasionally; and this fact, with reference to the two exercises which I have just mentioned, no longer throws itself into the balance in favour of standing armies. The nation practises the one exercise, and *did* practise the other, every day of its life, as a pleasure; and with a consequent effect which renders any future improvements to be superadded by a teacher an inappreciable quantity. And so it may be with rifle marksmanship. If the nation adopts rifle-shooting, as it once did archery and now does horsemanship, if it takes pride and pleasure in it, you will be able to raise, at any moment, a militia who, in point of skill with their weapons, shall have nothing to learn from their 'regular' rivals."

The same friend also says, in reference to the question how far a standing army has the advantage

over a militia in point of courage, that “the lower the natural military qualifications of a people, the greater will be the superiority of the standing army; and the higher their natural valour, the less will be the superiority;” and then comes to this conclusion: “So, as I maintain that, with a cowardly people, the superiority in courage of a standing army is as something is to nothing, or, putting it in an algebraical form, is as $x : 0$ —*i.e.*, infinite; with a brave people I believe that the superiority in courage of a standing army over a militia would sink into comparative insignificance, when compared with the valour which each party (each being assumed to be of the same nation or race) would bring into the field. The proportion would then stand as $x + 10x : 10x$ —that is, as $11 : 10$ —a small superiority.”

Such is the result where the militia is composed of riflemen and horsemen so exercised, and the standing army opposed to it are of the same race, and possessing the same measure of natural courage. It follows that if the standing army opposed to this militia be of another race, not possessing precisely the same measure of natural courage, such standing army will have no superiority whatever over such militia.

This physical well-being in the free citizens of a free State is necessarily accompanied by moral and mental well-being, by patriotic spirit and general force of character, by moral and mental energy.

The frequent meeting together of the youth for athletic exercises, and of the men for the discussion of public matters, binds together each little community; and while it exercises both their minds and bodies, in a very different manner from that in which any State system of education like that of Prussia does, inspires each individual with that love of his country and that force of character which animated the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ, and dictated the dying words of Sparta's great and heroic enemy on the field of Mantinea: "I have lived long enough, for I die unconquered."

The patriotism and force of character which were produced in so eminent a degree in the little republics of ancient Greece, were also signally exhibited by Rome in its early history; and in later times by small nations, like the Swiss and Scots, which offered a heroic and successful resistance to powerful enemies seeking to deprive them of their independence: Bannockburn and Morat may be joined with Marathon and Thermopylæ. And there is, as it appears to me, even a still greater degree of patriotic spirit and unconquerable courage displayed in bearing up against repeated defeats, as the Romans did against Hannibal, and the Scots under Wallace against Edward I. Of men with souls thus invincible—men who might be overpowered by numbers and superior generalship, but could never be reduced to despair—*desperare de republicâ*—consists the real strength of

nations, and not of the power to buy foreign mercenaries.

The incapacity to understand this spirit rendered David Hume, with all his intellectual power, unfit to write history, as well as unable to fathom some of the depths of human nature. The whole force of the Roman empire, although exerted to the utmost under Severus, one of its most warlike princes, could not totally subdue the nation of the Caledonians; whose invincible spirit in defence of freedom* at last obliged that empire, after granting them peace, to spend nearly two years in building a wall of solid stone, twelve feet high and eight feet thick, with forts and towers at proper distances, and a rampart and ditch, from the Solway firth to the mouth of the Tyne, about sixty-eight miles, to repress their inroads. And Severus, in his attempts to subdue Caledonia, is said to have lost no less than fifty thousand men.† And yet Mr. Hume says that the Romans entertained a contempt for Caledonia.‡

But there is no nation in ancient or modern times that possessed, as far as I am aware, institutions so eminently fitted to produce both patriotic spirit and force of character as those of England, while they remained in their healthy and uncorrupted state; and before the attempts had commenced to assimilate

* *Devita morti pectora liberæ.* Hor. *Od.* iv. 14, 18.

† *πέντε μυριάδας ὄλας.* Dio, l. lxxvi. c. 13.

‡ *Hist of England*, ch. i.

late them to the slavish institutions of continental Europe: particularly to those of Prussia, the people of which have been described by a modern writer as "the most superintended, the most interfered with, the most destitute of civil freedom and political right—in a word, the most enslaved people in Western Europe, and the most educated."*

* *Laing's Observations on Europe in 1848 and 1849*, p. 188.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEAR DEFENCE OF NATIONS.—THE MODERN
ENGLISH NATIONAL DEFENCES.

IN the sixth chapter I have quoted some very significant words of the great Duke of Wellington. "If the French should succeed in landing an army in England, then, indeed," says the duke, "would commence an expensive contest, whatever might be the result of the military operations." The duke was led to make these remarks by the just complaints of the English people on account of the enormous expense of the war in which they were then engaged. Under the circumstances of the present time, a question, which is not new, forces itself upon public attention—the question, viz., What are the causes of this enormous expense of modern wars undertaken by Great Britain?

Some writers, and particularly David Hume, seem to think that the question is solved by the consideration of the greater facilities and means for borrowing which existed after the Revolution, and did not exist before it. In his *Essay on Civil Liberty*, published in 1742, Hume says: "Among the moderns, the

Dutch first introduced the practice of borrowing great sums at low interest, and well nigh ruined themselves by it. Absolute princes have also contracted debt; but as an absolute prince may make a bankruptcy when he pleases, his people can never be oppressed by his debts. In popular governments, the people, and chiefly those who have the highest offices, being commonly the public creditors, it is difficult for the State to make use of this remedy; which, however it may be sometimes necessary, is always cruel and barbarous. This, therefore, seems to be an inconvenience which nearly threatens all free governments, especially our own at the present juncture of affairs.* And what a strong motive is this to increase our frugality of public money, lest for want of it we be reduced by the multiplicity of taxes, or, what is worse, *by our public impotence and inability for defence*, to curse our very liberty, and wish ourselves in the same state of servitude with all the nations that surround us."

Ten years later, when the debt had risen to seventy-six millions, Hume, in his *Essay on the Balance of Power*, comes to the conclusion "that above half of our wars with France, and all our public debts, are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence than to the ambition of our neighbours; that our

* At that time the funded debt was about fifty millions. What would Hume have said when it had risen to nearly twenty times that amount?

allies always reckon upon our force as their own, and, expecting to carry on the war at our expense, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation; and, finally, that we are such true combatants that, when once engaged, we lose all concern for ourselves and for posterity."

But all this amounts rather to a statement of effects than an explanation of causes. For it altogether fails to explain why our wars carried on under Edward I., Edward III., and Henry V., had no tendency to reduce us to the state of "public impotence and inability for defence" pointed out in the passage I have quoted. At all events, it affords a very imperfect solution of the question. And as the problem is one which now presses, and every succeeding year will press with constantly increasing force, upon the people of England, it appears to be a matter of paramount importance to attempt to arrive at some satisfactory solution of it.

Many persons have probably heard of Burke's celebrated expression "the cheap defence of nations," who do not very clearly understand its meaning; or at least assume that it is a mere figure of rhetoric belonging to his lamentation, usually considered more eloquent than wise, for the departure of the age of chivalry. The statement of a few facts that nearly concern all of us who pay taxes, without finding ourselves in the number of those gentlemen who are in possession of lands that "were formerly the property

of the crown, and subjected to all the feudal tenures,"* will show how full of meaning is the expression "the cheap defence of nations."

From the battle of Hastings, and the commencement of the Norman dynasty and the feudal system (strictly so called) in England, to the restoration of Charles II., is a period of 594 years. During that time, England kept her national defences in so complete a state that no foreign power dared to attempt invading her, and carried on besides a vast number of great wars, in the course of which she planted her flag on the walls of Acre, made one king of France prisoner, and dethroned another, restored a king of Spain to his throne, destroyed the Spanish Armada, and finally made the name of Englishman as much respected over the world as that of Roman had been. And all this she did without contracting a farthing of debt!

From the restoration of Charles II. to the year 1815 is a period of 155 years. During that comparatively short time (very little more than a fourth of the former), England, in carrying on wars which should certainly not have cost her greater efforts than those above referred to; in making war for the Dutch; for the succession to the crown of Spain; in making war, first for, and then against the House of Austria; in conquering Canada; in losing America; in the wars of the French Revolution; and, in the

* 1 Bl. *Com.* 307.

course of all this, in subsidizing more than half Europe;—contracted a debt of upwards of 800 millions! while taxes to an enormous amount were levied on the labouring and commercial classes of the community.

These results of the two periods present a contrast so startling, that a strong desire must naturally arise in the mind of every reflecting Englishman to endeavour to learn the causes of that contrast; in other words, to attempt a solution of the great political and historical problem which such a phenomenon presents.

The solution of this question, as it appears to me, is to be sought for in some great organic change that must have taken place in the English constitution in the course of the seventeenth century. If we look into any of the historians who have treated of the events of that period, we shall find nothing to lead us to suppose that anything was then done which could lead to such momentous consequences. Nevertheless, an Act of legislation was then passed, which worked a change so important in the fundamental laws of England, as almost to amount to a fresh conquest of the country.

Although it may be laid down as an indisputable truth that every man who puts himself forward to represent a body of his countrymen in Parliament, ought to possess a competent knowledge at least of that portion of the laws of his country which forms

what is called its constitution, it is no less true that to acquire such a measure of knowledge demands an amount of time and study which a very small proportion of members of the legislature have ever been found to have devoted to that purpose. During the first thirty years of the seventeenth century, however, the House of Commons had the advantage of possessing among its members some of the greatest constitutional lawyers that England has ever produced. In answer to those who sneer at lawyers, however great, it is to be observed that these men—Coke, Selden, and others—are not held up as the perfection of human wisdom themselves, but as the faithful and exact depositaries of that knowledge embodied in the common law of England; which is the result of the experience, through innumerable ages, of the most practically sagacious race of men that the world has ever seen. Much of that invaluable knowledge is found throughout the debates on the Petition of Right and other great constitutional questions; and a summary of it is embodied in the Petition of Right itself, drawn by the hand of Sir Edward Coke.

The king, however, who, after many evasions, at last passed the Petition of Right, determined to elude his own act; and the laws embodied in it, though the undoubted ancient constitutional birth-right of Englishmen, had to be long and obstinately fought for, not in Parliament, but on fields of battle. But though the close of the conflict left those who

fought for the Petition of Right victorious, it by no means left the great constitutional question in precisely the state in which the great constitutional lawyers referred to would have considered it as justly settled.

All through the reign of James I., a question which occupied very much of the time and attention of the Parliament was the question of getting rid of the feudal tenures. The same hand which drew the Petition of Right drew up an account of a motion made at the Parliament, in the eighteenth year of the reign of James I., for commuting the feudal tenures and payments into a "competent yearly rent, to be assured to his Majesty, his heirs and successors." This motion Coke stamps with his approbation, "hoping that so good a motion will some time or other, by authority of Parliament, one way or other, take effect and be established."* The amount of the rentcharge which was to be substituted for the feudal payments, was equal to nearly one-half of the whole revenue of the kingdom at that time;† and as the value of the land would increase with the increase of the wealth and revenue of the kingdom, the proportion would remain the same at present. The lawyers, however, who succeeded Coke and Selden, both in the Long Parliament and the Convention Parliament, such as Sir Anthony Ashley

* 4 *Inst.*, 202, 203.

† Sinclair *Hist. Reven.* vol. i. pp. 233, 244.

Cooper and Sir Heneage Finch, took a very different view of the matter.

The importance of this change, from a parliament guided by such lawyers as Coke and Selden, to parliaments guided by such lawyers as Ashley Cooper and Heneage Finch, is proved by the difference between the proceedings of the parliaments of the eighteenth century, and those of the parliaments of former times. What was the cause of this difference? The cause was simply this. Under the old English constitution, the legislating classes had a direct personal interest in keeping down the expenses of the government: that is, those who voted for wars and subsidies carried on the wars and paid the subsidies with their own blood and their own money; whereas, under the constitution substituted in the room of it, about the middle of the seventeenth century, those who voted for wars and subsidies carried on the wars and paid the subsidies with other people's blood and other people's money. Those, therefore, who profess to be the advocates of good and economical government, will never attain their object till they obtain the restoration of that part at least of the *principle* of the old constitution, which gave to those who had the power a strong and direct interest in keeping down the expenses of the government. A rent-charge proportioned in amount to the *incidents* or branches of tenure by knight-service in time of peace, and to the main trunk, or a certain number of days'

actual military service, *in addition* to those incidents, in time of war, would effectually accomplish its object, and save the nation from the ruin in which the system of the last two hundred years, if persisted in, will overwhelm it long before another period of two hundred years has elapsed.

So blind to all this were the statesmen and legislators of the Long Parliament, that they had the foolish profligacy to abolish the Court of Wards and Liveries,* and all tenures by knight-service, *without any compensation or equivalent whatever to the State*. The vote or ordinance to this effect, which passed on the 24th of February, 1646, was an act of robbery of the State on the largest scale. It was, however, not acted upon at the time; not from any feelings of compunction on the part of the perpetrators of it, but from the necessities of the time. The dues of wardship, and all the other dues which were the fundamental conditions on which the lands of England had been granted as private property, continued to be rigorously exacted till 1656; when Cromwell, having become a large landholder as well as Protector—in other words, an unconstitutional tyrant in the seat of the ancient constitutional kings of England—the last vestige of the English constitution was destroyed: an assembly of his crea-

* The Court of Wards and Liveries was established to superintend and regulate the necessary inquiries as to the payments due in each case in respect of the feudal tenures.

tures called a parliament, which passed an Act "for the further establishing and confirming" the ordinance above mentioned.

The military service and its commutation or substitute, called Scutage or Escuage, was the main body, or trunk, of the system by which England was governed and defended, without national debt, for six hundred years. The jurisdiction of the Court of Wards comprehended only the incidents or branches of the main trunk. Now, since the main part of this system, the defence of the kingdom, only came strictly into operation in time of war, in such a reign as that of James I. it would almost be lost sight of; while in less peaceful reigns, it would form a large portion of the public revenue. It may, therefore, be concluded that the amount of the rent-charge proposed in the reign of James I. was rather below than above a perfectly fair average. The amount of the rent-charge then proposed was 200,000*l.* a year;* and, since it appears from the account which has been published, of James the First's revenue during the first fourteen years of his reign, that his ordinary income did not exceed 450,863*l.*† a year, it follows that, at that time, the portion of the public revenue to be derived from the proposed rentcharge was equal to not much less than one-half of the whole public

* *Old Parl. Hist.* vol. v. pp. 264, 267; *Sincl. Hist. Reven.* vol. i. p. 233.

† *Sincl. Hist. Reven.* vol. i. 244.

revenue of the kingdom: and that, too, upon an old valuation of estates at a time when the principal part of the system, the active military service, had fallen somewhat out of view. Now, as that proportion would have continued, the rentcharge would at this time have amounted to more than twenty million pounds sterling. The effect of such an arrangement would also have been to keep the burden of making wars, and of subsidizing foreign States, where the English constitution had wisely placed that burden—namely, on those who made laws and voted for wars and subsidies; and consequently, half, at least, of the wars and subsidies of the eighteenth century would have been avoided.

It is difficult to convey an adequate idea of all the pernicious consequences of this act of injustice. But the nature of it may be made intelligible to all men, who are capable of comprehending that an act which confirms rights while discharging them from their correlative obligations, and thus creates rights without obligations, is at once a moral and legal anomaly, which cannot exist without a logical absurdity and a moral fraud.

The land of England was held on certain well-defined conditions, which conditions were, in the strictest sense, the *purchase-money* of that land. That purchase-money may be very accurately described to have been made payable as a perpetual annuity to the State, increasing in value as the land increased

in value, just as tithe is payable to the clergy, and copyhold and other rents and profits to the landholders. But the members of the Long Parliament and of the Convention Parliament of 1660—in the face of the emphatic protest of Prynne and other sound constitutional lawyers—voted that the holders of the land of England should be totally exonerated from the future payment of this perpetual annuity, which constituted the purchase-money of their estates; and that this annuity, or purchase-money, should for the future be paid, in the shape of an excise, *by other people*, who held none of the land for which they were thus made to pay.

Before this change, first made by the Long Parliament, and confirmed by the Act 12 Car. II. c. 14, passed by a majority of two—the votes being 151 for the resolution, and 149 against it—the government of England was (as has been shown in the preceding chapter) so constituted, that the defensive force of the kingdom was bound to be efficiently furnished by those whose lands were granted to them on that express and specific condition. In the debate on the resolution in 1660, many members spoke vehemently against the measure proposed; some saying that if this bill were carried, every man who earned his bread by the sweat of his brow must pay excise to excuse the nobility and other landholders from the payments which were the conditions on which their estates had been granted. The most profound lawyer

of that time, Prynne, said it was not fit to make all housekeepers hold *in capite*, and to free the nobility; and inveighed passionately, says the Diary, against the excise, which was to be substituted in lieu of the payments for which the lands of England had been granted to be held as private property. However, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper spoke for the excise, and carried his point; though it will hardly be contended that his voice carried much more constitutional than moral weight with it.*

In the sixth chapter, we have seen some of the fearful consequences of a great successful crime perpetrated by one great man. The people of England have now got to pay the interest of eight hundred millions of debt, as one of the consequences of a great crime hitherto successfully perpetrated, not by one great man, but by 151 small men.

Hume, in the passage quoted in a preceding page, says, that borrowing is the peculiar inconvenience of what he calls free governments, and that the Dutch first introduced the practice.

Now, in the first place, I think that the English government may be fairly called a free government under the Plantagenets: though not under the Tudors and Stuarts. For instance, Edward I. sent a requisition to some of his barons and others to follow him in arms to Normandy; or contribute money aids

* *Parliamentary History*, vol. iv. pp. 148, 149; *Comm. Journ.* Nov. 21, 1660.

thereto; "which," says Coke, "the constable and marshal, and many of the nobility and of the knights and esquires, and *all* the freeholders, vehemently denied, unless it were so ordained and determined by common consent of Parliament." The "free government" will then hardly account for our no debt before, and our enormous debt after, the Revolution.

Again, the cases of Holland and England are very different. It might be a good, or at least a necessary policy for the Dutch to borrow, when borrowing was a policy neither good nor necessary in the case of England. It is evident to any one who looks at a map, that if Holland was to make any figure among the nations of Europe, it could not be by such resources as those which had made England a great power for the six hundred years preceding the year 1660.

The Normans took from the Anglo-Saxons their country; but bound themselves by engagements, which they fulfilled for six hundred years, to defray at least the principal expenses of governing it in peace, and defending it in war. Upon these conditions they enjoyed (to a certain extent as private property) the productive powers of the soil of a country which contained a very large quantity of good and fertile land. For those who had thus become possessed of this large amount of fertile land upon these conditions—namely, that the rest

of the community were to be relieved from the burden of taxation—to throw off these conditions, and declare that in future the expenses of the government in peace and war should be supplied by taxes on the poor, was to reduce the bulk of the community to the condition of a people like the Dutch; who, as they had little land to pay rent to the State, must, if they aimed at being a considerable nation, or even at defending themselves from their more powerful neighbours, have recourse to excises and other taxes, and even to loans.

For a government and a legislature to set about deliberately to substitute for the land-rent, which had maintained the expenses of the government for six hundred years, a vast number of taxes on industry and commercial enterprise, was to reduce a country like England to the condition of a country like Holland. When it is added, that the example of Holland was followed so far as to introduce the funding system, and even the system of raising money by lotteries, and to leave nothing untaxed—from the salt that was necessary to the poorest labourer, to the French wine which the tax rendered no longer accessible to the middle class, or to any but the landholding legislator, whose means were increased by that system which destroyed the well-being and the comforts of all the other classes—we fear we must say, that to do all this was to do precisely what Lord Bacon describes

the ants as doing in an orchard or garden. And it partakes of the nature of those "extreme self-lovers," who, as Bacon says, "will set a house on fire and it were but to roast their eggs. . . . It is the wisdom of rats—it is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger who digged and made room for him—it is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour."

By the political constitution of England, as well as by its physical form and structure, the expenses of the government were to be paid without taxing the inhabitants. They were to be paid in part from the lands that belonged entirely to the State, and in part from the rent reserved on those the usufruct of which had been granted to individuals. What, then, shall be said of that policy which, in order that a few might revel in wealth and luxury, deprived the people of England of nearly all the natural advantages of soil and climate which Providence had bestowed upon them? The result was precisely as if the landholders had put into their own pockets the difference between the quantity of land in England and the quantity in Holland, making the people of England supply from their hard-won earnings the deficiency thus caused.

"Taxes upon the necessities of life," says Adam Smith, "have nearly the same effect upon the circumstances of the people as a poor soil and a bad climate. Provisions are thereby rendered dearer, in

the same manner as if it required extraordinary labour and expense to raise them. . . . Such taxes, when they have grown up to a certain height, are a curse, equal to the barrenness of the earth and the inclemency of the heavens; and yet it is in the richest and most industrious countries that they have been most generally imposed. No other countries could support so great a disorder. As the strongest bodies only can live and enjoy health under an unwholesome regimen, so the nations only that in every sort of industry have the greatest natural and acquired advantages, can subsist and prosper under such taxes. Holland is the country in Europe in which they abound most, and which, from peculiar circumstances, continues to prosper; not by means of them, as has been most absurdly supposed, but in spite of them.”*

The question of the difference between the ancient and modern national defences of England may be shortly stated thus:—

By the fundamental laws of England, the condition on which the land was granted to be held as private property was, that the landholders should have 60,000 men always ready, thoroughly armed and disciplined, and of such military excellence as to be a sufficient protection against any force that Europe could bring against England, at a time when the population of England and of Europe

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. iv. ch. ii.

may be estimated at about a tenth of what it now is. If the fundamental part of the English constitution remained now in force, England, instead of having a debt of more than 800 millions, would, allowing for the increased population, and the increased value of the land, have the power of raising, at twenty-four hours' or twelve hours' notice, an army of 600,000 of the best soldiers, and a navy in proportion, of the best sailors in the world. We should not then, I think, have to hear of Frenchmen talking of invading England as if such an enterprise were a promising speculation. At the same time it concerns the people of England most nearly to attend to the fact that, in the present condition of their government, it *is* a promising speculation.

A certain orator of the last century said, with all the confidence of incapacity,—“ I believe that I can save this country, and that no one else can.” What is urgently needed now is, some public man who can look somewhat farther than orators usually look, and can see somewhat more clearly than orators usually see, how to save this nation from the fate to which the system of the last 200 years has been hurrying it, and on which it is now drifting with a constantly increasing velocity.

CHAPTER X.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE.

I HAVE said, in the first chapter of this work, that the subject might be more satisfactorily elucidated from the negative than the positive aspect of it: that is, from observing the principal causes that have led to the decline of the strength, and ultimately to the ruin, of nations. I propose to devote this chapter to an attempt to discover whether there are any such causes at present in active operation in this country.

It may, I believe, be stated as a general fact, that men employed in agriculture, or as herdsmen and shepherds, make better soldiers than men employed in the more delicate kinds of commerce and manufactures. "It is certain," to borrow the apt words of Lord Bacon, "that sedentary and within-door arts and delicate manufactures (that require rather the finger than the arm) have in their nature a contrariety to a military disposition;"* while, on the other hand, he observes, that tillers of the ground and handicraftsmen of strong and manly arts, as smiths,

* Bacon's *Essay on the true Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates*.

masons, carpenters, and the like, are best fitted to make good soldiers.

And it is equally true, as has been remarked by Adam Smith, that "those who live by agriculture generally pass the whole day in the open air, exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons. The hardiness of their ordinary life prepares them for the fatigues of war, to some of which their necessary occupations bear a great analogy. The necessary occupation of a ditcher prepares him to work in the trenches, and to fortify a camp as well as to inclose a field. The ordinary pastimes of such husbandmen are the same as those of shepherds, and are in the same manner the images of war. But as husbandmen have less leisure than shepherds, they are not so frequently employed in those pastimes. They are soldiers, but soldiers not quite so much masters of their exercise."*

It follows from this, that the larger the proportion of men in any nation employed in agriculture, and the smaller the proportion employed in manufactures, the better will that nation be able to defend itself; and the greater the proportion employed in manufactures, and the smaller employed in agriculture, the less able will it be to defend itself. This may be stated as the general rule, to which, as to other general rules, there are exceptions; among which may be reckoned such a case as that of many of the best

* Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i. part i.

soldiers of Cromwell, and any case in which the natural valour of the men of one nation employed in manufactures is superior to the natural valour of the men of another nation employed in agriculture. There cannot be a doubt, however, that, generally, constant sedentary and within-door occupations are not favourable either to strength of nerve or strength and hardiness of body. It is also of the first importance to call attention here to another general fact mentioned by Adam Smith, as the consequence of national wealth. "Military exercises come to be as much neglected by the inhabitants of the country as by those of the town, and the great body of the people becomes altogether unwarlike. That wealth, at the same time, which always follows the improvements of agriculture and manufactures, and which in reality is no more than the accumulated produce of those improvements, provokes the invasion of all their neighbours. An industrious, and upon that account a wealthy nation, is of all nations the most likely to be attacked; and, unless the State takes some new measure for the public defence, the natural habits of the people render them altogether incapable of defending themselves."*

Now, England is a wealthy nation,—the most wealthy, perhaps, at present, in the world. It is, therefore, of all nations the most likely to be attacked and to provoke the invasion of its neighbours. Its

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. ch. i. part i.

nearest neighbour is France, with which England has often had to contend before ; but since the time in which the earlier, and even the later, struggles occurred between England and France, certain changes have taken place in the internal condition of the two countries, which require the most minute and careful attention of English statesmen ; for they may have a most important effect in any future struggle between the two countries.

The relative condition of England and France usually appealed to by English writers is that which existed towards the end of the Plantagenet dynasty, as described by Sir John Fortescue, for many years chief justice, and afterwards chancellor, to Henry VI. Fortescue, as an Englishman, and from his position, is a high authority on the subject of England ; and, in regard to France, he describes that of which he was an eye-witness, having retired thither with the wife and son of the unfortunate Henry. He thus describes the manner of life which gave strength to the arms of the yeomen who drew the English bowstrings at Agincourt :—

“ Every inhabitant of England useth and enjoyeth at his pleasure all the fruits that his land or cattle beareth, with all the profits and commodities which he gaineth by his own labour or that of those he retains in his service. They drink no water, unless at certain times upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are fed in great abundance

with all sorts of flesh and fish, of which they have plenty everywhere; they are clothed throughout in good woollens; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in great store. They are also well provided with all other sorts of household goods, and necessary implements for husbandry, and all things which conduce to make life easy and happy, according to their several conditions.”*

In another work, Fortescue has forcibly depicted the poverty and misery of the more than half-starved, of the wretchedly-clothed, overworked, and brutally-treated people of France; and the different effects on the people of such food, clothing, and treatment as they had in France and England respectively in his time. In France, “their nature is much wasted, and their race brought to nought.† They are crooked and feeble, not able to fight and to defend their country; nor have they weapon, nor money to buy their weapon withal; but verily they live in the most extreme poverty and misery. . . . But, blessed be God, this land (England) is ruled under a better law, and, therefore, the people thereof be not in such penury, nor thereby hurt in their persons, but they be wealthye [well-to-do], and have all things necessary to the sustenance

* Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, cap. 36.

† The former extract is a translation from Fortescue’s Latin. The work of Fortescue from which I now quote being in English, I have only modernized a little the spelling and style.

of nature. Wherefore, they be mighty, and able to resist the adversaries of the realm, and to be at other realms that do or will do them wrong.”*

It appears that at that time there were between forty and fifty freeholders, besides a knight and an esquire, in every hamlet in England.† It can also be shown, upon good authority, that about the same time the labourer earned two pecks of wheat a day. But a change was about to come over the scene.

The political and social causes that convulsed Europe during the sixteenth century, though they did not produce the same effects in England which they did in the other European nations, produced changes of considerable importance. They destroyed the old feudal aristocracy. Many noble families became extinct; and many others lost all, or a great part of, their lands; while new men rose on their ruin or misfortunes. The practice of the contending factions, particularly of Edward IV., was to spare the soldiers, but to slay the nobles and gentry; few of whom escaped. Stow, in describing the battle

* Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, cap. 29.

† *The Difference between ‘Dominium Regale’ and ‘Dominium Politicum et Regale,’* chap. iii. This is the title which the treatise bears in the MS. in the British Museum and in the Archbishop’s library at Lambeth. The title in the printed copy is “*The Difference between an Absolute and Limited Monarchy*, by Sir John Fortescue, Knight, Lord Chief Justice and Lord High Chancellor of England under King Henry VI. Published by John Fortescue Aland, of the Inner Temple, &c. London, 1714.” Fortescue’s account is confirmed by the *Mémoires de Philippe de Commines*, ch. 18, 19.

of Northampton, says, "The tenth day of July, at two of the clock afternoon, the Earls of March and Warwick let cry thorow the field that no man should lay hand upon the king, ne on the common people, but on the lords, knights, and esquires."*

Confiscation followed slaughter. As the law of entail, founded on the statute *De Donis*, had often saved estates from forfeiture, the judges of Edward IV. removed the obstacle, by deciding that a *common recovery* was a valid conveyance; and the same object was further promoted by the Statute of Fines,† in the reign of Henry VII. Though in the course of time an oligarchy was to rise in the place of the aristocracy thus destroyed, there was an interval of a transition state, extending from the accession of the Tudors to the expulsion of the Stuarts, during which the new nobility constituted neither an aristocracy nor an oligarchy, but were the mere creatures and satellites of the court; and as they were the creatures, so also were they often the victims of the monarch's caprice and convenience.

By the large confiscations of landed property arising out of the wars of York and Lancaster, and the removal of the restrictions on the alienation of land, large tracts of land passed from old families into other hands. The nobility now sought the distinction which they could no longer obtain by numbers of armed retainers, by indulgence in ex-

* Page 409.

† 4 Hen. VII. c. 24.

pensive habits of luxury. To obtain money for this purpose, they not only diminished the number of their followers, but dismissed great numbers of small tenants, and let their lands in large tracts, with the view of obtaining higher rents. Though this system was openly opposed by Henry VII.—a statute for keeping up farmhouses in conformity with previously existing laws against depopulation having been passed during his reign—it was not effectively resisted; and, indeed, it may be supposed to have been secretly encouraged by him, as favourable to his policy of increasing his own power for the time.

The new purchasers of the lands of the old nobility, being bound by none of the old ties that existed between their predecessors and their dependants who lived on their lands, pursued the system of expulsion with unrelenting barbarity. Many authentic accounts have come down to us from that time, of the misery of those who, no longer necessary for power or pomp, were mercilessly driven from their homes and deprived of the means of subsistence. In a proclamation of King Edward VI. in 1548, the misery thus arising is described in strong colours. In some places where there used to be one hundred or two hundred inhabitants, there was then scarcely one poor shepherd. “Houses decayed, parishes diminished, the force of the realm weakened, and Christian people, by the greedy covetousness

of some men, eaten up and devoured of brute beasts, and driven from their houses by sheep and bullocks.”* “Now the robberies, extortions, and open oppressions,” said a preacher before Edward VI., “of covetous cormorants have no end nor limits, no banks to keep in their vileness. As for turning poor men out of their holds, they take it for no offence, but say the land is their own; and so they turn them out of their shrowds like mice. Thousands in England, through such, beg now from door to door, who have kept honest houses.”†

This state of things could not fail to attract the attention of the legislature; but it was to no purpose, when it was the interest of the legislators to elude their own enactments. The statute of 1489, a repetition of former enactments for keeping up farmhouses, pronounced by Bacon “a statute of singular policy,” did not relieve the misery of the people. The law provided that all houses of husbandry, used with twenty acres and upwards, should be maintained and kept up for ever with a competent proportion of land attached to them, under the penalty of seizure of half the profits by the king or the lord of the fee till the statute were complied with.

Bacon’s argument on this is, that the principal strength of an army consists in the infantry; that to make good infantry requires men bred not in a

* Strype’s *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 92, &c.

† Bernard Gilpin, *ibid.* p. 441.

servile or indigent fashion, but in some free and plentiful manner; that, therefore, if a State run most to noblemen and gentlemen, and the husbandmen and ploughmen be but as their workfolks and labourers, or else mere cottagers, "which are but housed beggars," you may have a good cavalry, but never good stable bands of foot.*

But the landholders maintained that they acted by their right of property: that they had a right to do what they liked with their own, and still continued their work of expulsion and depopulation; partly for the purpose of consolidating farms, and partly of turning arable land into pasture, with a view to the increase of their rents. And their rents certainly did increase prodigiously.†

In 1597, more than a century after the passing of the statute of Henry VII., Bacon brought the matter before the House of Commons; and his speech, of which D'Ewes has preserved a short note, shows that the work of expulsion was still going on,

* Bacon's *History of King Henry VII.*, pp. 235, 236, Montagu's edition.

† Bishop Latimer, in one of his sermons (*Latimer's Sermons*, p. 32), says that whereas his father paid 3*l.* or 4*l.* by the year of rent for his farm, "he that now hath it payeth 16*l.* by the year or more." And in another sermon preached before Edward VI., in 1549, he says, "That heretofore went for 20 or 40 pound by year now is let for 50 or 100 pound by year." And Harrison, while he complains of the misery of the working people, bears testimony to the same effect:—"In my time," he says, "peradventure 4 pounds of old rent be improved to 40, 50, or even 100 pounds."—*Descript. of Engl.*, 188.

bringing in its train idleness, decay of tillage, subversion of houses, and decay of charity, and impoverishing the state of the realm. "I would be sorry," said he, "to see within this kingdom that piece of Ovid's verse prove true — 'jam seges ubi Troja fuit;' so in England, instead of a whole town full of people, nought but green fields, but a shepherd and his dog."*

The statute 31 Eliz. c. 7, which forbids building cottages unless there be four acres of land to each, would appear to have been, in a great measure, inoperative. It is remarkable, that just four years after this, was passed the famous statute† of Elizabeth, for the relief of the poor, which provided the new nobility with a mode of relieving themselves of the inconveniences arising from their having driven thousands to beggary who had once "kept honest houses." This, unquestionably, was one main cause of this poor law. But there were other causes at work.

The process by which the number of men employed in agricultural pursuits in England has been diminished, is of a twofold nature—the destruction of the class of small proprietors, and the destruction

* D'Ewes' *Journ.* p. 551. Latimer (*Sermons*, p. 32) uses the same expression. He says, that where there had been "a great many householders and inhabitants, there is now but a shepherd and his dog." And he charges the new nobility with intending "to make the yeomanry slavery, and the clergy slavery."

† 43 Eliz. c. 2.

of the class of small farmers. Sir Thomas Smith, in his *Commonwealth of England*,* has stated, as the condition requisite to make a yeoman, the being able to spend of his own free land, in yearly revenue, to the sum of forty shillings. It appears, however, that the term "yeoman" was popularly applied without the condition stated by Sir Thomas Smith. Bishop Latimer, in one of his sermons, in which he describes his father's mode of living about the beginning of the sixteenth century, says:—"My father was a yeoman and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of 3*l.* or 4*l.* by the year, at the uttermost; and, hereupon, he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He was able and did find the king a harness, with himself and his horse, while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath fields. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now."†

In regard to the class of small proprietors, it was established beyond question, before the parliamentary committee of 1824, that the employers of agricultural labour—landholders and farmers—combined, not in individual parishes, but generally throughout England, to compel the small freeholders and copyholders to sell their holdings and become paupers.

In consequence of the great fall in the value of

* Book i. ch. 23.

† Latimer's *Sermons*, p. 32.

money in the course of the sixteenth century (caused partly by the debasement of the coin, partly by the fall in the real value of the precious metals), and the corresponding rise in the price of all other commodities except labour (the wages of labour being kept down by Act of Parliament), towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the wages of the agricultural labourer did not procure him above a third of the quantity of food which they procured him in the fifteenth century.

As the labourer could not live on the wages thus allowed him, the legislature made up the difference by a tax called a poor-rate. Part of this tax in aid of wages being levied on persons who were neither employers of labour nor receivers of rent; the farmers, having to pay less in wages, could and did pay much more in rent.* Such increase of rent was, therefore, at least in part, a tax paid by the rest of the community, not to the State, but to the receivers of rent; as the still greater rise of rent since 1790, and particularly that caused by the corn law of 1815, was also.

Under the system which, in extension of the statute

* Bishop Latimer, in the sermon before quoted, says, that whereas his father paid 3*l.* or 4*l.* by the year of rent for his farm, and out of the said farm made provision for his children, and kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and gave alms to the poor, "he that now hath it payeth 16*l.* by the year or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, or for his children, or to give a cup of drink to the poor."

of Elizabeth, prevailed from 1795 to 1834, a large portion of the wages of agricultural labour being paid out of the poor-rates, persons who were neither employers of labour nor receivers of rent were taxed to a much greater extent than they had been before, to pay for the cultivation of other people's lands. This system fell, with peculiar hardship and crushing effect, upon the class of small proprietors, whether freeholders or copyholders. The holdings of many of these persons being not quite sufficient for their subsistence, they had been accustomed to supply the deficiency by obtaining employment from those who might stand in need of the labour of others to cultivate either their farms or freeholds. But now, these small proprietors, who did not employ any labour but that of their own and their children's hands in cultivating their small freeholds or copyholds, were not only compelled to pay poor-rates (in other words, to pay for the cultivation of their richer neighbours' lands), but the farmers refused to employ them as labourers so long as they possessed any property. Thus, by a system which would seem equal to any the wit of man could devise for the ruin of a nation, the class of small proprietors was almost wholly swept away.

The small proprietors were now reduced to the condition of labourers. We have seen how superior the condition of England was to that of the continental nations in the fifteenth century. In the

course of his examination before the Lords' Committee on the Poor Laws in 1831, Earl Stanhope, being asked,—“Does your lordship mean to say that the landowners ought to be bound to employ the labourer?” replied,—“I think they certainly ought, when those labourers have not, by allotments of land or in other modes, other sources of support. And I would here observe, that in several, if not in all, of the States of Germany, the labourers are copyholders, and derive great advantage from the occupation of land; which, however, in some States is heavily burdened by direct taxes, land-tax, and others; but such are the advantages which they receive, that in those countries poor-rates do not exist; and as far as my experience, which is very considerable, extends, I am fully convinced that the labourers in those countries live in much greater comfort than they do in this.”*

It has been stated by witnesses of unexceptionable authority before parliamentary committees, that before 1793 the agricultural labourers of England brewed their own beer. I have had this statement confirmed by good authorities. I may mention in particular the experience of a gentleman who had farmed part of his own estate in the county of Kent for fifty-five years, and who had always paid to his labourers wages somewhat above the general average of the district. This gentleman informed me that

* *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 213.

he was persuaded that the condition of the agricultural labourer was not so good as it was previously to the war of 1793. He did not farm to any extent till towards the close of 1793; and his labourers did not then, nor have they since brewed with malt. Some labourers, however, had recourse to bran and sugar, as substitutes; but generally, brewing, either with malt or bran, may be considered to have ceased.

I met with a rather curious corroboration of this statement as to the previous condition of things. There was in the neighbourhood of the gentleman I refer to an old shopkeeper, who had a perfect recollection, when assisting in the shop of his grandfather, of serving customers with small quantities of malt, from a peck to a bushel. But that was prior to 1793. To the best of his recollection the labourers discontinued generally, in that part of the country, to brew about that period. The proximate cause of this was doubtless the increase of the duty upon malt; but the labourer's discontinuing to brew was dependent on many other causes, more or less remote, but all converging to one point—the depression of his condition.

According to the scale of the Berkshire magistrates in 1795, 9*s.* 9*d.* per week was the magistrates' allowance to a family of four persons, when the gallon loaf was 1*s.* 5*d.* Out of this they had to procure not only food, but clothes and shelter. It is

now admitted, even by those who formerly contended that the corn laws were beneficial to the labourer, that with wages reduced to six, or eight, or nine shillings a week, the English peasant could no longer boast that, however coarse his fare, at least he had enough of it.

The extreme hardship and injustice of compelling persons to pay poor-rates in the agricultural districts, who, being able to cultivate their own land with their own hands, would therefore get no return of the money thus paid, in the shape in which the farmers and larger landholders did, will further appear from the following evidence of Henry Drummond, Esq., J. P. for the counties of Hampshire and Surrey, given in his examination before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on labourers' wages in 1824.

Mr. Drummond stated that much of the money paid returned to the farmers in the labour performed on their farms; that he had never known any instance where gravel-digging or stone-picking was paid for by gentlemen, but that it was always paid by the overseer. Again, that a great part of the allowance which the labourer received, returned to the farmers and landowners in the shape of exorbitant rent for cottages. "I have known," said Mr. Drummond, "many instances where the amount paid by a labourer for a cottage was greater than the amount of relief which he received from the

overseer. The rent of cottages is so high that it is one of the chief causes of the agricultural labourers being in a worse state now than they ever were. Before the war, the average rent of cottages with good gardens, was 1*l.* 10*s.* a year; it is now in our own neighbourhood commonly as high as five, seven, or even ten pounds per annum; and where cottages are in the hands of farmers, they always prohibit the labourers from keeping a pig, and claim the produce of the apple-trees, and of the vine which usually covers the house. In some parishes, where cottages are at this exorbitant rate, the poor have built themselves turf huts on the wastes. The farmers have pulled them down, and the people have rebuilt them. The farmers invariably refuse to relieve those who occupy these huts, alleging that they are possessed of property, and that they will not relieve them nor give them work, unless they give up their huts.”*

“The widow,” says Mr. Carlyle, “is gathering nettles for her children’s dinner; a perfumed seigneur, delicately lounging in the *Œil de Bœuf*, has an alchemy whereby he will extract from her the third nettle, and name it rent and law.”

In regard to the class of small farmers, the present practice in England, and still more in Scotland, is completely at variance with the principle of the old statutes respecting farms, so much contended for

* *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 47.

by Lord Bacon. The small farms have everywhere disappeared, or are fast disappearing. Some political economists may profess to show that the produce of the land is greater by this process; but if it should appear in the end that this process proves the ruin of Great Britain, as it had before proved the ruin of Sparta and Rome, it will turn out but a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy. Of course the landholder obtains a higher rent, or he would not throw several small farms into one large one; and within certain limits, a man may do what he likes with his own.

It is evident, however, that the maxim "a man may do what he likes with his own," must have certain limits. For example, a man, for some advantage to himself, but not to the public, may not blow up his house with gunpowder to the injury or destruction of his neighbours' houses. To take another example: if a given number of persons were to portion out among themselves the kingdom of Great Britain, and, driving all its population into close towns where there was not space for them to obtain air and exercise sufficient for health and strength, were to cultivate the land by machinery, and deprive the nation of such an agricultural population as should form an efficient defence against an invader, the nation might, and would, resist such a measure as contrary to the very fundamental principles of civilized society as well as of the British constitution. The nation might, at the same time, raise the

question, "By what right do these men call this territory their own?" The nation might then go on to argue that the territory belonged to the State, and not to those individuals, who were merely the descendants or otherwise the representatives of individuals, to whom the State had assigned the use or usufruct of it on condition of supporting the expenses of the government in peace and war; and moreover, of defending the country when attacked, either in their own persons, or by efficient substitutes; consequently, that these individuals, by thus attempting to "do what they liked with their own," had incurred, by the laws of England, a forfeiture of what they called their own.

This is the argument which applies to that portion of the lands of the United Kingdom held under the system of tenures introduced into England by William the Norman (a subject which has been treated more fully in a former chapter), or under the similar system of tenures introduced into Scotland and Ireland subsequently to the time of William the Norman. But it must not be forgotten that *all* the land of Great Britain was not brought under this feudal system of tenure. Nearly all the Highlands of Scotland remained in their original state. In that part of the kingdom, certain districts of country were occupied by certain tribes or clans, whose internal government was regulated pretty much by what is called the patriarchal principle.

In the case of these clans, the confusion between sovereignty and property, which was made by the kings of England when they alienated the ancient demesnes of the crown of England, has been carried to a fearful extent; those who claimed the rights of sovereignty in this case not being content to claim a part of the *public* property, but claiming the whole as their *private* property, and dealing with it in such a way as to inflict a vast amount of individual misery and national loss of strength.

On the evening before the battle of Bannockburn, Robert Bruce promised that the heirs of all who fell should receive their lands free.* Now it is beyond a doubt that, with the exception of the MacDougals of Lorn, almost all the Highland chieftains, with their followers, were at the battle of Bannockburn. If the English had won the battle of Bannockburn, the followers and clansmen of these Highland chieftains would probably have been in as good a condition as the English copyhold tenants, who were originally the conquered bondmen of the Anglo-Normans. It is evident that the laws of England would not permit any lord of an English manor, under the pretence of improving his property, to expel the copyholders of his manor. But the Highlanders, who have of late years been expelled from the country which their forefathers had occupied

* Tytler's *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 307.

for so many ages, so far from being in the condition of conquered bondmen, were the freemen by whose swords their chiefs had so long held their territories, and, in many cases, had first acquired them. The promise of Robert Bruce, moreover, would, at least in some cases, confer a positive title, though there might be considerable difficulty in establishing the proof of heirship to those who fell on the day of Bannockburn. But the question is so important that it demands a more minute examination.

The mountainous region of the north of Scotland contained large tracts of moorland, which were anciently employed chiefly for the rearing of cattle. It was found at a later period that these extensive pastures might be employed with much greater advantage in the feeding of sheep. For this latter occupation the Highlanders were by nature and education as unfit as they were qualified for that of rearers of cattle. The result was, that the sheepfarmers of the south of Scotland made offers of large rents to the Highland chiefs, with which the Highland tenants, or tacksmen, were unable to compete; and the latter, being deprived at once of their lands and their occupation, left the country, with large numbers of those employed under them as herdsmen, and emigrated to North America and other foreign settlements.

Sir Walter Scott says that he can well recollect the indignation with which these proceedings were

regarded by the ancient Highlanders. He says* he remembers hearing a chief of the old school say, in sorrow and indignation, the words following: "When I was a young man, the point upon which every Highland gentleman rested his importance was the number of MEN whom his estate could support; the question next rested on the amount of his stock of BLACK CATTLE; it is now come to respect the number of *sheep*; and I suppose our posterity will inquire how many *rats* or *mice* an estate will produce."

It has not yet come to rats or mice; but red deer are superseding sheep. The clergyman of one parish said lately that within the last few years he has lost about one hundred and twenty of his small congregation, who have been obliged to leave the country where their forefathers had been settled for centuries, because their landlord, a man of enormous landed possessions, had resolved to turn a glen of some ten miles in extent into a deer forest. And it may be added that, in a late session of Parliament, the motion of a Scotch member for the equitable assessment of deer forests and other shooting grounds was set aside.

Now when it is said that the change here referred to was a necessary consequence of the great alteration in the social and economical system, and that

* History of Scotland contained in *Tales of a Grandfather*, vol. ii. p. 572. Edin. 1846.

therefore it was an inevitable evil, it is to be observed that this question has not merely a politico-economical, but also a legislative or rather jurisprudential aspect; and it is under this latter aspect that we must now examine it somewhat minutely.

The question under this aspect is, by what right do these Highland chiefs claim a property so exclusive in the soil of the districts over which their rights of chieftainship extended, as to give them the power of expelling from their tenements in those districts, by their mere fiat, tenants of the land, who held their land by *customary* tenures at least as ancient and of more respectable origin than those of the copyholders of England? The answer, it would seem, is, by the right of sovereignty. Their ancestors, they say, were sovereign in those parts, and they are the representatives of those ancient sovereigns. Their claim to the property is based on their claim to the sovereignty. Let us admit their claim to the ancient sovereignty in its fullest extent. Let us admit, for example, that their claim to the sovereignty of their respective glens and mountains was as substantial as the claim of William the Norman to the sovereignty of England. Let us even admit that it was more so: for the sovereignty in England never resided altogether in the King; but first in the King and his Great Council or Great Barons, and afterwards in the three powers (or estates, as it is rather inaccurately expressed, since,

strictly, the three estates were the Lords, the Clergy, and the Commons)—the King, the Lords, and the Commons.

What follows? William the Norman might possibly have expelled or exterminated (it matters not which, and in fact he did so, or very little short of it) all the Saxons who did not acknowledge his sovereignty; *but could he have expelled or exterminated all the Normans*, if such had been his wish? Most assuredly not. No more could any Highland chief, in his capacity of sovereign, have expelled or exterminated all his clansmen or vassals, when it was his will and pleasure to do so. The proposition (that they could do so) is so monstrously absurd, that no man would ever venture to propound it thus, in its naked and true form, even to the rudest and most obtuse understanding. Yet these petty sovereignties having become united to the British empire, the representatives of their ancient sovereigns come forward to the British Parliament, and ask it to lend them the aid of its overwhelming power to enable them to do what, in their capacity of sovereigns (the capacity, be it observed, in which their claim of property is grounded), they could no more have done than King George the Fourth could have sold all the land in England without consulting the holders of it, and put the money in his pocket. Sancho Panza's notable scheme for deriving advantage from the government of an island by selling all the in-

habitants for slaves and putting the money in his pocket, is an illustration of the transaction. And as Sancho declared to his worshipful master his capacity for government on any scale of magnitude—"I beseech your worship that you forget not your promise concerning that same island; for I shall know how to govern it, be it never so big: let them be never so black, I will transform them into white and yellow;"—so has it been with these Highland chieftainships: whether their "bigness" was confined to one small glen, or extended to nearly a whole county.

It would be a case precisely analogous, if, when Scotland was united to England, the family on the throne of the United Kingdom had claimed the right, as representative of the ancient kings of Scotland, of expelling all the holders of land in Scotland, and converting the land to their own use and profit, as if it were their private property; or if Great Britain were to be united to some kingdom the power of which might enable the representatives of the present race of kings of Great Britain to claim all the land of Great Britain as their private property. The Highland chiefs held their sovereignty by the same right by which the Norman kings held the sovereignty of England—by the right of the sword: the *ultima ratio* to which all rights, legal as well as moral, ultimately refer themselves. But as it was by the sword of their vassals that the Norman kings

held their sovereignty, so it was by the sword of *their* vassals, or *clan*, that the Highland chiefs held *theirs*.

The tenure by which the Norman king and the Celtic chief held not merely their possessions, but their very existence, was the swords of their respective vassals. In the case of the Celtic chief, the title was fairly written and very duly stamped; as any one can satisfy himself who will examine the temper of some of those admirably poised basket-hilted broad-swords, bearing the name of Andrew Ferrara engraved on their blades, which were drawn by their masters for the last time at Culloden. The Norman kings acknowledged the force and necessity of the mutual bond by assigning to their vassals portions of the conquered territory, and *securing* to them those portions by the same tenure by which they held their crown. There cannot be a doubt that, in the generality of cases, the Highland chiefs were as much indebted to their vassals for the tenure of their chieftainship, as the Norman kings of England were to theirs for the crown of England. But circumstances, principally of a moral nature, placed the Highland chiefs under less imperative necessity of repaying the debt of long and most important, nay, of inestimable service, which they owed their clan, by giving them a secure and vested interest in the soil which they had defended with their blood through innumerable ages.

The chief of these circumstances was, that the clan bearing the same name, and considering themselves as of the same blood with their chief, looked upon him as their common father (only that the filial feeling was mixed up with a feeling more deeply reverential than that ordinarily entertained by children towards their parents), and no more thought of asking any securities from their chief of their right to a portion of the soil which their swords had first won in far distant times, and had defended through so many succeeding ages, than a son of ordinarily good feelings would ask his father to give him the same securities that he would not disinherit him, which he would deem necessary to his safety in dealing with a stranger.

It is true that, in civilized communities, it is the common practice to leave nothing of this kind to chance, as appears from every well-drawn marriage settlement, but carefully to define and secure the rights of the children, even against their own parents. But it is to be recollected that the Scottish Celts, of whom we speak, were a rude and unlettered people, whose cardinal point of honour was a deep and passionate attachment to their country, rocky and barren and bleak though it might be; to their chiefs, and to the honour of their race. What, then, shall be said of the representatives of those chiefs coming forward now to take advantage of the unguaranteed state in which the honourable feelings of this rude and simple

people had left their dearest rights, to expel them from the fields and mountains and dwellings of their forefathers—converting their very virtues into the instruments of their destruction, and turning the noble qualities of devoted loyalty, of reverential and unsuspecting confidence in the honour and affection of their chiefs, to the ruin of those who nourished these qualities? What shall be said, too, of the conduct of the government, calling itself civilized, which could lend the sanction of its name and the support of its power to the performance of such a deed? And yet this is what the government of Great Britain has done within the last fifty years.

If it should be alleged that, by the union of their petty sovereignties with the kingdom of Great Britain, these Highland chiefs acquired the same right over the territories held by the clans who acknowledged them as their chiefs, as any Anglo-Norman baron had over his fief—that is, that they became in regard to those districts, in the language of the English lawyers, “seised in their demesnes as of fee”^{*}—we distinctly deny the doctrine; which is precisely similar to the doctrine that, by the union of a smaller principality with a larger, the representatives of the family which had been sovereign in the smaller should become, by such union, absolute owners of all the property of their former subjects.

^{*} *Litt.* § 10.

Moreover, if anything of this kind had taken place—if one part of the feudal system had been introduced, and those Highland chiefs had become “seised in their demesnes as of fee”—it being an indispensable condition of that system that the leader should amply reward his military followers, those by whose swords he made his acquisitions—the *tacksmen*, or those who, under the Celtic system, held immediately of the chief, would have been lords of manors; and all the clansmen, who belonged to the conquering caste, would have been possessed of knights’ fees.

Nothing of this kind has taken place; and it is surely by a strange system, both of law and logic, that those Celtic persons, called Highland chiefs, should come forward and claim all the incidents of feudal tenure which are favourable to them, while they repudiate all those which are on the side of their followers or clan. The Anglo-Norman conquerors treated even their conquered bondmen a hundred degrees better than these Celts treat their conquering followers; those to whom they owe their being Highland chiefs. The copyhold tenants of England were, according to the opinion of the greatest English lawyers, originally *villeins*; that is, they were conquered bondmen, who performed the agricultural drudgery of the lords’ land; but in process of time, by the liberality and indulgence of their lords, they acquired a secure and vested

interest in a portion, at least, of the lands they tilled.*

We have seen how the early strength, both of Rome and England, was bound up with the existence of a large class of hardy men who tilled their own land with their own hands, and whose rights were secured to them by law. The Roman writers have attributed the final ruin of Rome to the destruction of this class; and the English writers, both constitutional lawyers like Fortescue, and lawyers and philosophers like Bacon, have always spoken of this class as the sheet-anchor of England's strength. There is a deep significance in the fierce exhortation put by Shakspeare into the mouth of the last Plantagenet on his last field, which does not apply to any other modern nation—"Fight, gentlemen of England—fight, *bold yeomen!*" But it seems that the English laws which fostered this class that made England so long invincible, have changed their character; and while they are framed for the aggrandizement of the few, pay less regard to the rights of the many than any other laws in Europe.

A distinguished modern continental writer, M. Sismondi, says: "It is by a cruel abuse of legal

* It was laid down by Danby, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in 7 Edward IV., and by his successor, that a copyholder, observing the customs of the manor, and performing his services, should, if put out by the lord, have an action of trespass against him—a doctrine which has long been fully established.—*Litt.* § 77; 1 *Inst.* 60 b; 1 *Cru. Dig.*, 269.

forms—it is by an unjust usurpation—that the *tacks-men* and the tenants, whether of the county of Sutherland or of the rest of Scotland, are considered as having no right to the land which they have occupied for so many ages, and their former leaders, or chiefs, are authorized to violate the contract which has existed [though an *unwritten* contract] for so many generations.” And he then proceeds thus :—

“The vast extent of seignorial domains is not a condition peculiar to England. In all the empire of Charlemagne, in all the West, whole provinces had been taken possession of by warlike chiefs, who had them cultivated for their use by the vanquished, by slaves, or sometimes by their companions in arms. In the ninth and tenth centuries, Maine, Anjou, Poitou, were, for the counts of those provinces, three great farms, rather than three principalities. Switzerland, which in so many respects resembles Scotland, in its lakes, and mountains, its climate, the character, manners, and habits of its children, was likewise at the same period parcelled out among a small number of lords. If the counts of Kyburg, of Lentzburg, of Hapsburg, and of Gruyères, had been protected by the English laws, they would find themselves at the present day precisely in the condition in which the earls of Sutherland were twenty years ago ;* some of them would, perhaps, have had the same taste for *improvements*, and several republics

* This work of M. Sismondi was published in 1837.

would have been expelled from the Alps to make room for flocks of sheep. But whatever may have been originally the right of the lord, legislation has not ceased during eight centuries, throughout the whole of Europe, to guarantee and ameliorate the condition of the feudatory, of the vassal, of the serf, who held of him ; to strengthen the independence of the peasant, to cover him with the buckler of prescription, to change his customs into rights, to shelter him from the exactions of his lord, and to raise gradually his tenancy-at-will to the rank of property. The law has given to the Swiss peasant the guarantee of perpetuity, while it is to the Scottish lord that it has given that same guarantee in the British empire, leaving the peasant in a precarious situation.”*

The result has been thus described by one who may be considered no mean authority on such a subject. “In many instances,” says Sir Walter Scott, “Highland proprietors have laboured with laudable and humane precaution to render the change introduced by a new mode of cultivation gentle and gradual, and to provide, as far as possible, employment and protection for those families who were thereby dispossessed of their ancient habitations. But in other, and in too many instances, the glens of the Highlands have been drained, not of their superfluity of population, but of the whole mass of the in-

* *Etudes sur l'Economie Politique*, par J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, tome i. p. 230 : Paris, 1837.

habitants, dispossessed by an unrelenting avarice, which will be one day found to have been as short-sighted as it is unjust and selfish. Meanwhile, the Highlands may become the fairy ground for romance and poetry, or subject of experiment for the professors of speculation, political and economical. But if the hour of need should come—and it may not, perhaps, be far distant—the pibroch may sound through the deserted region, but the summons will remain unanswered. The children who have left her will re-echo from a distant shore the sounds with which they took leave of their own—*Ha til, ha til, ha til, mi tulidh!*—‘We return—we return—we return—no more!’”*

Let us now see what has taken place in France of late years in regard to agriculture. Some ten years ago, M. Passy, peer of France, and a former minister of commerce and finance, published a work on large and small farms, including a view of the progress of the division of the soil in France since 1815, from which it appears that, though there are no means of knowing the exact number of the owners of the soil, the number of landed properties inscribed in the registers of the land tax is very great.

Years.	No. of Properties as taxed.				Population.
1815	10,083,751	...	29,152,742
1826	10,296,693	...	31,851,543
1835	10,893,528	...	33,329,575
1842	11,511,841	...	34,376,723

* *Review of Culloden Papers.*

Now as many of the tax-payers have lands and houses in different parts of the country, as there are also properties portions of which extend into several districts, the number of properties is much greater than that of proprietors. There cannot exist a doubt, however, that the number of proprietors is great.

The figures given above show an increase of fourteen per cent. in the number of properties during the twenty-seven years between 1815 and 1842. This is a yearly addition of scarcely more than one-half per cent.; an addition rendered still smaller by the consideration that during the same period the population has increased about eighteen per cent. It follows, therefore, that the prediction of those who said that the change of law in France had led or was leading to infinitesimal subdivisions of landed property, is completely falsified; since, instead of having multiplied beyond measure, the number of proprietors has not even followed the general increase of population: indeed it was, in proportion to the total number of the population in France, a little less in 1842 than it was in 1815.

But the question with which we are here specially concerned is the condition of the French agricultural population. Those who predicted about forty years ago that, in half a century, France would be the greatest pauper warren in Europe, drawing their conclusion from what had been observed in Ireland, confounded two things that are quite distinct—the

extent of farms, and the nature of their tenure. Cultivators of any kind, small or large, holding their land without leases and at high rents, like the French farmers whom Arthur Young saw, or the Irish farmers of late years, must, as a matter of course, be unprosperous and miserable. The reports of intelligent and trustworthy observers state that, though generally the hired labourers are well off, the peasantry are observed to be most prosperous in those parts of France in which the largest proportion of them are proprietors. And the concurring testimony of credible eye-witnesses is to the effect that, upon the whole, the French peasantry are the most prosperous and the happiest in Europe. Now, if we compare such a peasantry as this with the peasantry described by Sir John Fortescue or by Arthur Young, we shall see that France now possesses a vast deal more of that strength which consists of the materials for making hardy soldiers, than she did in former times.

The English constitution intrusted the defence of England to those who held the land of England. The commercial and manufacturing elements of the population may supply means for maintaining the colonies and dependencies, but the old constitutional laws have emphatically prescribed the agricultural element as the defensive force of England itself. It therefore becomes the duty of English statesmen to inquire diligently whether Great Britain, under pre-

sent circumstances, ought to decrease generally her agricultural population ; and, in particular, whether she ought to permit that portion of her territory which once produced a numerous, hardy, and warlike population, to be turned into a deer forest for the profit or the pleasure of a few individuals. For when the hour of need shall come—and Sir Walter Scott said, some thirty years ago, “it may not perhaps be far distant”—though the summons of the pibroch will remain unanswered in that now deserted region, it is not yet too late to repair a part at least of the mischief done.

But the whole case has not yet been stated, inasmuch as we have spoken only of the materials for the defence of the country, not of the handling of those materials. It has been shown over and over again in the course of this work, that an army composed of men of inferior military qualities may, in the hands of a great general, beat an army composed of men of superior military qualities. So, troops like the English, possessing the very highest military qualities, unequalled bodily strength and endurance, and indomitable courage—which no superiority of numbers, no amount of adverse circumstances, no extremes of heat and cold, and not even pestilence, can reduce to despair—may be wasted and ruined, as if they were things of no value, by a vicious military system: a system which persists in acting as if military genius were not the gift of God, to be

indeed cultivated afterwards for use by the incessant labour of man, but could be purchased by money, or came by inheritance. And if a nation's means of producing men possessed of the best military qualities are constantly decreasing, while at the same time the government of that nation is such that the chances are about ten to one, or rather a hundred to one, against the general's being a man possessing military genius, we should say that such a nation was in a rather bad way for defending itself against a daring, powerful, and ambitious neighbour, who might have special and potent reasons for desiring to conquer, or at least to injure and humble, that nation.

Now let us look closely at one or two facts of somewhat recent date.

To those who have read with care and discrimination the history of England for the last century, I may, perhaps, appear to have been in error when I said, in the third chapter of this work, that it is impossible to conceive any amount of incapacity, feebleness, and disorder exceeding that exhibited by the Athenian democracy in the last half-century of its existence. The same effects may be expected to flow from the same causes, and the orators who, through the influence of their rhetoric on the English Parliament, govern England, may be fairly said to have equalled, or very nearly equalled, in mischief, if not in eloquence, the Athenian orators of ancient days.

Of the English orators the most famous are the two Pitts—father and son. In regard to the elder Pitt, it is enough to mention his small abortive expeditions against the coast of France, so different from those of the Plantagenets; and so different from the descent of an efficient force at Boulogne, Calais, or Port l'Orient, as proposed by Frederick to the English ambassador. Lord Macaulay, in his splendid eulogy on the first Pitt's eloquence and patriotism, says: "Even as a war minister, Pitt is scarcely entitled to all the praise which his contemporaries lavished upon him. We, perhaps from ignorance, cannot discover in his arrangements any appearance of profound or dexterous combination. Several of his expeditions, particularly those which were sent to the coast of France, were at once costly and absurd. Our Indian conquests, though they add to the splendour of the period during which he was at the head of affairs, were not planned by him."

To find the military errors of the orator father reproduced on a larger and still more costly scale in the administration of the orator son, is perhaps but what we had too much reason to expect. It is stated by Dr. Pellew, Lord Sidmouth's son-in-law and biographer, that Lord Sidmouth often told his friends that, after his accession to the government, he called for a statement of the losses, from every cause, incurred by the British forces on foreign service, especially in the West Indies, since the commence-

ment of hostilities in 1793, a period of about nine years, and that it amounted to the number of 1,350 officers, and 60,000 men : a loss probably not greatly exceeded by that incurred by the Duke of Wellington in his six Peninsular campaigns.

Wellington only became successful on a great scale when he had acquired sufficient weight to be let alone. His published despatches fully show this. They show how constantly he was thwarted and embarrassed, not only by the obstinate imbecility of the military government at home, but by the effects of parliamentary interest in forcing upon him inefficient military materials of all kinds. The Duke is also reported to have said that when *all* his papers were published, some of the grand statues raised by the government would have to come down again. Whether such a report be true or not, a careful analysis of his published papers may be thought to establish sufficiently such a conclusion. But the most instructive fact which these voluminous despatches establish, is the fact itself of their very existence in such bulk ; proving what an amount of time and labour it was necessary for the Duke of Wellington to take, from the vast multitude of immediately and urgently pressing concerns around him, in order to endeavour to introduce sense and knowledge into heads which did not hold brains enough to govern a henroost or drive a flock of geese across a common.

A nation must be going fast to ruin when it is governed by orators who can drive it into needless and most expensive wars without ever risking their own blood; as the two Pitts, and as numbers of the English oligarchy, who have figured as governors-general of India for the last half-century, have driven England; and when the foremost places among statesmen are assigned to such men.

The only glory in conquest must be in the valour and military skill displayed. A man who obtains the appointment of governor-general of the British empire in India by rhetorical displays in the British Parliament, and then, by way of adding to his rhetorical renown the military glory of a conqueror, sits and plans an annexation of new territory to an empire already much too extensive, and picks a quarrel at his desk, can have no solid title to honour from the result of such a proceeding, however ably the general who is employed under him may act.

As the first Pitt, with his doings, was reproduced some half-century back in the second Pitt, so was the second Pitt, with his doings, reproduced in our parliamentary orators of 1854, with their doings. The amount of imbecility displayed by the English government in the conduct of its military affairs would be incredible if we had not seen and had not too great cause to remember it. Great, indeed, must be the moral as well as the physical strength and energy of the nation which has so long endured,

without utterly perishing, such an amount of incapacity in its rulers, with all the disorder, the prodigality, the waste of treasure, blood, and strength, which such incapacity brings in its train.

“The truth is,” says a writer in *The Times* of the 19th of December, 1854, “that organization and system seem to be totally foreign to the military and official mind. If we trace our stores from England to their destination, or, placing ourselves in imagination at the seat of war, inquire into the wants of the soldiers and their cause, we shall equally arrive at the same conclusion. The stores are put on board, but no care is taken to see where or in what order they are packed. That which is wanted at Constantinople, is at Varna; that which is wanted in the Crimea, is at Constantinople. Drugs are buried under shot and shell, and shot and shell cannot be landed, because there is but one jetty for twenty or thirty ships; till drugs and shell go together to the bottom, because there is no attempt to regulate the respective positions of the fleet, or to establish order and regularity in the harbour of Balaklava. The army is starved, the siege is interrupted, the horses perish, because it is found impossible to carry food, ammunition, and fodder over unformed tracks which the rain has converted into quagmires.

“Now, it is not too much to say that all this misery and disaster might have been avoided by attention to the single matter of organization. Had

one-half of the care, energy, and attention which goes to the management of a railway, a manufactory, or a steam-packet company, been bestowed upon the conduct of this expedition, on which the freedom of Europe, the regeneration of Asia, and the destiny of the whole human race for the next century depend, we should not have to chronicle these disasters, or complain of these miseries. For a very few pounds a week, Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown are able to arrange that continuous chain of subordination and inspection which pervades a single establishment, employing thousands of men, to produce a single result. But that practical ability which any man can get for a few hundreds a year, all our apparatus of peerages, titles, pensions, and honours, fails to call into existence."

What would be the natural inference that a daring, able, and ambitious man, at the head of a powerful military nation bordering on England, would draw from all this? The manifest inference would be that England, with a military system in a state of such hopeless imbecility—at least apparently hopeless, for the delinquents were rewarded, not punished—was precisely the country, with its enormous wealth and its enormous military weakness, to attack which were a speculation likely to pay. It would seem as if nothing could have hindered such a man, in such a position as has been described, from attacking England before this time, but a spirit

of forbearance. It will not do, however, for a nation like England to trust to any man's forbearance. Moreover, whatever may be the personal qualities of the present ruler of France, and whatever may be his friendly disposition towards England, it is authoritatively affirmed that the bulk of the French nation is very desirous to attack and invade England; and it is notorious that France has long been, and is now, building steam-vessels for the transport of large bodies of troops.

In the third chapter of this work it was shown that the Athenians, with their government of orators, were all talk and no do. The government of England, at present, in respect to military affairs, while its parliamentary element furnishes the usual supply of talk, is ominously characterized at once by doing many things that ought not to be done, and by leaving undone many things that ought to be done. On the other hand, the French government is all do and no talk.

Under these circumstances it must be evident, to a nation so practical and so sagacious as the English nation, that its military system must be changed at once, and changed thoroughly. The English love to walk by precedent. In this case their own history furnishes them with a precedent which produced the best soldiers, the best officers, and the most invincible army the world ever saw. The New Model of the army of the Parliament

of England, when the army was taken out of the hands of Essex and Manchester, and placed in those of Fairfax and Cromwell, who led it to uninterrupted victory, was nothing more nor less than an application to the conduct of military affairs of the common rules of prudence and good sense, which every successful man of business in England employs unceasingly in the management of his daily transactions.

Why the soldiers of Cromwell and the seamen of Blake were the best the world ever saw, will be apparent when to the evidence of their excellence, already quoted, is added the testimony of one whose troops were second to none, except their countrymen, the Ironsides of Cromwell. The Duke of Wellington thus writes on the 18th of July, 1813, soon after the battle of Vittoria:—"It is an unrivalled army for fighting, if the soldiers can only be kept in their ranks during the battle." His Grace then, after mentioning some qualities it wants, thus proceeds: "The cause of these defects is the want of habits of obedience and attention to orders by the inferior officers, and, indeed, I might add, by all. They never attend to an order with an intention to obey it, or sufficiently *to understand it, be it ever so clear*, and, therefore, never obey it, when obedience becomes troublesome, or difficult, or important." *

* *Gurwood's Selections from the Duke of Wellington's Despatches*, p. 713, No. 799.

Does not this show a want of intelligence, such as would not have been found in Cromwell's troops?

The Duke of Wellington has also thrown further light on the question, by what means was it that Cromwell's army became a machine so perfect as even to exceed the perfection of that army of which his Grace said, "I always thought that I could have gone anywhere and done anything with that army."* The Duke says: "Indeed, we carry this principle of the gentleman, and the absence of intercourse with those under his command, so far, as that, in my opinion, the duty of a subaltern officer as done in a foreign army is not done at all in the cavalry or the British infantry of the line. It is done in the Guards by the sergeants. Then our gentleman officer, however admirable his conduct in a field of battle, however honourable to himself, however glorious and advantageous to his country, is but a poor creature in disciplining his company in camp, quarters, or cantonments."†

* Evidence on military punishments: *Gurwood's Selections*, p. 929.

† Memorandum on plan for altering the discipline of the army, *Gurwood's Selections*, p. 920. See, in the same work (p. 626), General Order as to the officers commanding companies inspecting the ammunition at every parade, in order to ascertain "that every soldier in the ranks has at all times in his possession sixty rounds." Of the neglect of this precaution, "the consequence is, as happened in a late instance, that before the soldiers are engaged for five minutes, ammunition is wanting, and the stores are necessarily exhausted, at a great distance from all means of supplying them." One may judge, by comparing what the Duke of

This indicates some of the points that marked Oliver Cromwell and his Ironside officers as different from our modern idea of officers; and, no doubt, from the royalist as well as the early parliamentary officers of his time. Oliver Cromwell's Ironside officers, though, in the estimation of Lord Hollis, they might be a "notable dunghill," were assuredly not "poor creatures in disciplining their companies in camp, quarters, or cantonments."

The officers who raised themselves in the parliamentary army and navy appear to have enjoyed in the highest degree the confidence and love of those who served under them.

Wellington says, in the memorandum on the discipline of the army above cited (while he praises the gallantry and courage), of the inefficiency in some respects, and want of intelligence, of his officers, with the efficiency and intelligence of Cromwell's officers, what his army would have been with Cromwell's officers and soldiers and sixty rounds of cartridge in each man's cartridge-box.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NAVAL POWERS OF EUROPE.

THOUGH the English, not without cause, prided themselves on the part they had in the destruction of the Spanish Armada, and of the Spanish naval power generally, the sovereignty of the seas may be said to have passed from the Spaniards, not at first to the English, but to the Dutch. During the first half of the seventeenth century the Dutch seamen were esteemed the best in the world; and the confidence and haughtiness of the Dutch government were proportionally great. It was the genius of Blake and the valour of his seamen, animated to the highest degree of daring at once by the enthusiasm of free men fighting for their country's independence and honour, and by the knowledge that the highest commands in the fleet of the Parliament of England were open to all as the rewards of skill and valour, which first showed to the world that the sovereignty of the seas was destined to belong neither to the Dutch nor the Spaniards: by deeds which, undimmed as they were by the stain of civil strife and brothers' blood, still live in the most popular of our national songs.

As it was proved by the victories of Cromwell that the military affairs of England could be admirably conducted without the cumbrous and costly apparatus of "peerages, titles, pensions, and honours," so was it thoroughly proved, by similar achievements, that the naval affairs of England could be most admirably conducted also. And here a great commercial nation has a counterbalancing advantage to make up somewhat for its loss in the agricultural element of strength; for a great commercial nation, which maintains a large commercial navy, and has an extensive line of coast, necessarily possesses at all times a large number of hardy seamen bred in her fishing-boats and her merchant ships.

In 1649 the Parliament of England found itself suddenly at war not only with the Dutch, but with all the kings of Europe. The French had fitted out ships which, under the flag of Charles II., made prize of English vessels not strong enough to resist them. In Portugal a fleet under Prince Rupert was protected from the fleet of the Parliament. In Russia the English merchants were insulted and ill-treated by the government. Ascham, the agent of the Parliament in Spain, was assassinated in Madrid. Even in Holland (where, though the government was in name republican, the Princes of Orange, closely allied by marriage to the House of Stuart, were rendering themselves as absolute under the name of stadtholders as any kings in Europe),

Dorislaus, the resident minister of the Parliament, was assassinated by a band of royalists, headed or directed by persons of the highest rank under the Stuarts.

In the midst of this apparently overwhelming combination of enemies, it is instructive and memorable to all time to observe attentively the proceedings of the statesmen who then ruled England.

That was the golden age of the British navy: not only most strangely contrasted with that of the Restoration, but even with those times that came after, when the Commodore Trunnions complained that men with family interest, "who scarce knew a mast from a manger," were advanced over their heads, while they who had nothing to trust to but their courage and skill were laid aside and forgotten.

Besides the great energy and ability with which the affairs of the navy were conducted by the parliamentary committee of the Admiralty and Navy, of which Vane was at the head, Providence sent to the Long Parliament a man whose career, in the conduct of the Dutch and all their other foreign wars, was as singular and wonderful as that of Cromwell had been in the conduct of their domestic wars. This was Robert Blake. He, like Cromwell, had received a university education, but, unlike Cromwell, had pursued with some diligence the university studies; though not with sufficient success to attain the object of his youthful ambition—a fellowship in his col-

lege.* Though Blake became a member of the Long Parliament, he never appears to have formed any part of the "talking apparatus" of that potent assembly. He proved, however, a very essential part of the acting apparatus.

Blake was past fifty years of age when he was appointed to the command of the English fleet; which, as it was commanded by a land-officer who had received a university education (the ordinary education of an English gentleman of that age) was for the most part manned by land-soldiers, draughted from Cromwell's best regiments—men formed in that school which gave its pupils, with the habits and discipline that ensure victory, the resolution never to be beaten.

Blake's first service was against Prince Rupert, whom he pursued from Kinsale to the coast of Portugal, and chased into the Tagus. The King of Portugal refused Blake admittance, and assisted Prince Rupert to escape; thereupon Blake made prize of twenty Portuguese ships richly laden, and

* Dr. Johnson says, in his *Life of Blake*, "It is observable that Mr. Wood (in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*) ascribes the repulse he met with at Wadham College, where he was competitor for a fellowship, either to want of learning, or of stature. With regard to the first objection, the same writer had before informed us that he was an early riser and studious, though he sometimes relieved his attention by the amusements of fowling and fishing." Dr. Johnson makes a slight mistake as to the college where Blake stood for a fellowship, which, according to Anthony à Wood, was Merton College. Sir H. Davy mentions, in his *Salmonia*, that Nelson was fond of fly-fishing.

threatened still further vengeance. The King of Portugal then made all possible submissions, and was at last admitted to negotiate the renewal of his alliance with England.

Blake's next service was against the Dutch, who, as their seamen were then reckoned the best, had also at that time the two most renowned admirals in the world—Van Tromp and De Ruyter. Nevertheless, Colonel, now General, Blake—very ably seconded by two other land-officers, Deane and Monk, who, like Blake, became excellent sea-officers—defeated the Dutch in repeated engagements.

The energy of the Parliament of England, and the valour and ability of the officers they employed, are well described in the words of a member of that Parliament. "When Van Tromp," says Algernon Sidney, "set upon Blake in Folkestone Bay, the Parliament had not above thirteen ships against threescore, and not a man that had ever seen any other fight at sea than between a merchant-ship and a pirate, to oppose the best captain in the world, attended with many others in valour and experience not much inferior to him."* And even the accounts that may be considered as less favourable to the Parliament, describe the Dutch force as double the English; Van Tromp having a fleet of forty-two sail, Blake one of about half that number, in this

* Algernon Sidney's *Discourse concerning Government*, chap. ii. sect. 28.

first engagement. After a fight which lasted from two or three o'clock in the afternoon till night (19th of May, 1652)—and in which the officers and seamen fully justified the wisdom of Parliament in choosing men only for their merit and never *pressing* any men in all their wars—the English had the better.*

We shall not enter into the details of all these sea-fights, but a short account of some of them will serve to show the spirit with which Blake fought.

On the 29th of November, 1652, when Blake had only thirty-seven ships with him, Van Tromp faced him in the Downs with eighty sail of men-of-war and ten fire-ships. Blake, whose maxim was that the English flag should never decline the challenge of an enemy whatever his advantages, engaged with the whole Dutch fleet; and fought furiously from ten in the morning till six at night, when darkness saved the English fleet; with the exception of one ship burnt, one taken, and three sunk. But the Dutch fleet had also sustained great damage. After this fight, Van Tromp fixed a broom to his masthead, as if to proclaim that he meant to sweep the seas of the English navy.

But the Dutch were somewhat premature in their indecent exhibition of triumph, and appear to have miscalculated greatly the energy and resources of the Rump of the Long Parliament of England. Not

* Hobbes's *Behemoth*, p. 290; Hume, chap. 60.

many days after this battle was fought, Vane reported the navy estimates to the house. The most prompt and vigorous measures were immediately adopted to repair their shattered fleet and fit out another. Vane brought in a bill, and had it at once read a first and second time, to sell Windsor Park, Hampton Court, Hyde Park, the Royal Park at Greenwich, Enfield Castle, and Somerset House; the proceeds of the whole to be for the use of the navy. But the main source of the supplies was the land-tax and property-tax—a *bonâ-fide* tax on real and personal property, and not like the sham land-tax and sham property-tax devised in later times. The sum required was raised by a rate on all real and personal property, “according to the value thereof; that is to say, so much upon every twenty shillings rent, or yearly value of land and real estate, and so much upon money, stock, and other personal estate, by an equal rate, wherein every twenty pounds in money, stock, or other personal estate, shall bear the like charge as shall be laid on every twenty shillings yearly rent, or yearly value of land, as will raise the monthly sum or sums charged on the respective counties, cities, towns, and places.”*

Early in February, Blake was again at sea, having with him Deane and Monk, and eighty men-of-war.

Upon the 18th of February he descried, off the

* One of the enactments is preserved in *Scobell's Collection*, part ii. p. 400. The assessments were made every month.

isle of Portland, a Dutch fleet of seventy-six men-of-war, with a convoy of three hundred* merchantmen, and brought them to action, at first with only thirteen of his ships; Blake and Deane being both on board the *Triumph*, which received seven hundred shots in her hull. Van Tromp, and, under him, De Ruyter, commanded the Dutch. When the rest of the English fleet came up, a most furious fight ensued. For three days was the combat continued with the utmost fury and obstinacy. On the second day Blake renewed the fight off Weymouth, while Van Tromp put his merchantmen before him, and fought retreating towards the port of Boulogne. On the third day, a Sunday, Blake again brought Van Tromp to action, and fought him with advantage till four o'clock in the afternoon; when, the wind proving unfavourable to the English, Van Tromp got to Calais sands. The Dutch lost 11 ships of war, and 30 merchantmen, had 2,000 men killed, and 1,500 taken prisoners. The English, though many of their ships were extremely shattered, had but one sunk. Their killed were not much inferior in number to those of the enemy. The Speaker was directed to write a

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* Some accounts say two hundred, and some thirty. According to the account in the *Parliamentary History* taken from the letters from the three admirals of the fleet—Blake, Deane, and Monk—to the Speaker, dated aboard the *Triumph*, Feb. 27th, in Stokes Bay, and read in the House, March 1, the Dutch fleet was seventy-six vessels, with a convoy of three hundred merchantmen.—*Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1380.

letter of congratulation to each of the three admirals, "taking notice of the Parliament's resentment* of their great and faithful services in the late engagement, with thanks to them and the several commanders under them;" and a collection was ordered to be made in the house for the widows of sailors killed in the action.†

Between the times of Edward III. and Henry V., when England might seem to have almost been in a position to aim at a universal empire in Europe, and the time when Cromwell seized upon the powers of the Long Parliament, a great change took place in the state of Europe. The sanguinary civil wars which arose in the time of the unfortunate son of Henry V. are computed to have cost the lives of eighty princes of the blood, and they almost entirely annihilated the ancient nobility of England. This for a time gave a great preponderance to the royal power, till the balance was restored by the rise of the Commons, or rather of the smaller nobility or gentry.

About a century later, a part of the phenomenon, namely, the weakening of the power of the great nobility, without the rise of any other power corresponding to that of the English gentry, appeared in France. When Henry IV. obtained the crown

* The word in use at that time for what is now expressed by the word "sense." The modern phrase would be, "the Parliament's sense of their great and faithful services," &c.

† *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1380.

of France, he found it so easy to govern nobles exhausted and weakened with a long civil war, that he had time and inducement to form a design of settling permanently the balance of Europe. Of this great scheme (which comprehended an idea worthy of the great and amiable prince who formed it) of a universal and permanent peace, he, as Dr. Johnson has observed in his paper, written as an introduction to the Political State of Great Britain, "lived not to see the vanity, or to feel the disappointment, for he was murdered in the midst of his mighty preparations." In the succeeding reign, Cardinal Richelieu completed the work of depressing and crushing the power of the nobility, and elevating and establishing that of the king, with such a result that France began to assume an air of superiority to which she had never before made pretensions.

Between the time when England had ceased to be in the position she was in at the death of Henry V. and the rise of the pretensions of France, Spain, chiefly in consequence of her naval supremacy, openly pretended to give law to other nations. But with the destruction of the Spanish Armada, and the successful revolt of the Dutch, backed by the same English force that had destroyed the Armada, perished, if not the pretensions, the predominant power, of Spain. During the seventeenth century, with the exception of the years in which the Long Parliament—composed, according to the cele-

brated saying of Bishop Warburton, of "a set of the greatest geniuses for government that the world ever saw embarked together in one common cause"—assisted by a naval commander whose genius and valour were worthy of those who employed him, again asserted for her more than her old place among the nations, England continued to sink under the profligate but feeble and short-sighted tyranny of the Stuarts, till her very ambassadors were insulted at foreign courts, and the name of Englishman, from being a name of respect, terror, or hatred, became one of contempt, obloquy, and derision. In the meantime, while England grew weaker, her neighbours the Dutch and the French were growing stronger, till France, under Louis XIV., began to aim at universal empire.

Spain having been the last power in Europe at that time which had openly pretended to give law to other nations, even so clear and far-sighted a politician as Cromwell overlooked the real state of facts when he assisted the French to drive the Spaniards out of Flanders, at a time when it was the interest of England to have supported the Spaniards against France, as she formerly did the Dutch against Spain. But Cromwell, as Sir William Temple informs us, discovered his error, and intended, had he lived, to have withdrawn his troops from the side of France, and sent them to the assistance of Spain, with a view of redressing and adjusting the balance of power in

Europe.* Since that time all our exertions have been made, and all our money has been spent, against the power of France, in assisting Holland, Austria, Prussia—nay, in assisting and subsidizing nearly all Europe.

When the supreme authority was violently seized upon by Cromwell, Blake, though he preferred the republican form of government, declared that he should still be ready to discharge his trust and to defend the nation from insults, injuries, and encroachments. “It is not,” said Blake, “the business of a seaman to mind State affairs, but to hinder foreigners from fooling us.”† Notwithstanding this, one of Cromwell’s first acts of power was the substitution of Monk for Blake, in the chief command of the fleet which the Long Parliament had so ably provided, and of which they had appointed him to the command with such signal and successful results. Blake cheerfully submitted to command under the man thus sent to supersede him in the supreme command. “There,” truly has Mr. Forster observed, “as in every other action of the life of Blake, spoke out the heroic spirit which moved, in later but not such glorious years, the

* *Sir William Temple’s Works*, vol. i. p. 356. Sir William Temple gives, in the same place, a curious account of the designs of Cardinal Richelieu in regard to Flanders, and as to fomenting the discontents of Charles I.’s subjects against him.

† *Lives, English and Foreign*, vol. ii. p. 109.

passionate love and admiration of the English people at the mention of the name of Nelson.”*

On the 2nd of June, and the 31st of July, 1653, the Dutch were again completely defeated. The last great battle, in which the Dutch lost thirty ships and their renowned Admiral Van Tromp, put an end to the war.

Cromwell, towards the close of 1654, despatched a large armament under Admiral Penn and General Venables, to attack the Spanish power in the West Indies. The main object of this expedition was to take Hispaniola, in which object it totally failed; its only result was the acquisition of Jamaica, an acquisition of which Cromwell’s sagacity saw more of the value and importance than most of his contemporaries.

About the same time that this expedition was despatched to the West Indies, Blake was sent by Cromwell into the Mediterranean with a powerful fleet. The contrast now became manifest between these times and those when the English flag was insulted by every maritime power in Europe, and when the Barbary corsairs disembarked on the English shores, pillaged the villages, and carried the inhabitants into slavery to the number of several thousands: and all this, too, *after* the raising of ship-money. No English fleet had been seen in those seas since the time of the Crusades; and it soon appeared that, from one extremity to the other of the

* Forster’s *Life of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 173.

Mediterranean, there was no naval power, Christian or Mahometan, that could resist an English fleet commanded by Blake.

Blake's business was to demand reparation for all the injuries done to the English during the civil wars. Casting anchor before Leghorn, he exacted from the Duke of Tuscany satisfaction for the losses which English commerce had sustained from him. He then sailed to Algiers, and demanded, and obtained, reparation for the robberies committed upon the English by the pirates of that place, and the release of the captives of his nation. He next appeared before Tunis, and having there made the same demands, the Dey answered him with scorn, and bade him behold his castles. Blake's answer to this bravado soon convinced the Dey that times were changed since Buckingham was Lord High Admiral of England. He sailed into the harbour within musket-shot of the castles, and tore them in pieces with his artillery; he then sent out his long boats, well manned, and burned every ship which lay there. "This bold action," says Hume, "which its very temerity, perhaps, rendered safe, was executed with little loss, and filled all that part of the world with the renown of English valour."* He sent home, it is said, sixteen ships

* Hume, *Hist.* chap. 61; Johnson's *Life of Blake*; Whitlocke, p. 608 (8th June, 1655); Cromwell's Letter to General Blake, 13th June, 1655.

laden with the effects which he had received from several States, and no doubt in part with the English captives whom he had restored to liberty. One can hardly imagine a stranger scene than the casual presence of some of those liberated English captives, and of some of his old seamen who had shared in his unexampled achievements, in St. Margaret's church-yard, on that memorable day, when the bones of the hero were taken from their grave and cast, like those of a masterless dog, into a pit, where they still lie.

The respect with which Blake obliged all foreigners to treat his countrymen, appears, as Dr. Johnson has observed,* from the story told by Bishop Burnet, which has been often repeated since. When Blake lay before Malaga, before the war broke out with Spain, some of his sailors went ashore, and, meeting a procession of the Host, not only refused to pay any respect to it, but laughed at those who did. The people, incited by one of the priests to resent this indignity, fell upon them and beat them severely. When they returned to their ship, they complained of their ill-treatment; upon which Blake sent to demand the priest who had set the people on. The viceroy answered that, having no authority over the priests, he could not send him; to which Blake replied, "that he did not inquire into the extent of the viceroy's authority, but that if the priest were

* See Dr. Johnson's *Life of Blake*, Johnson's Works, vol. xii. p. 57. London, 1810.

not sent within three hours, he would burn the town." The viceroy then sent the priest, who pleaded the provocation given by the seamen. Blake answered, that if he had complained to him, he would have punished them severely, for he would not have his men affront the established religion of any place; but that he was angry that the Spaniards should assume that power, for he would have all the world know "that an Englishman was only to be punished by an Englishman." So having used the priest civilly, he sent him back. This conduct greatly pleased Cromwell. He read the letter in council with great satisfaction, and said, "he hoped to make the name of an Englishman as great as ever that of a Roman had been."

England now, indeed, occupied a truly commanding position. Blake had exacted satisfaction of the just demands of England from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, from the Deys of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. The Republic of Genoa thanked Cromwell by a special embassy, for having thus afforded protection to maritime commerce. The Vaivode of Transylvania sought his aid against the Turks; the King of Poland applied to him for support against the growing power of Russia; and the canton of Zurich appealed to him as the natural guardian of Protestant States. The Dutch were humbled. Treaties favourable to England had been signed with Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal. France

and Spain had sent embassies, and contended for the friendship of England.

Cromwell, as we have seen, had decided in favour of France. It is due to him to state that he made his decision subservient to one praiseworthy object. He refused to sign the French treaty till he had received an assurance from the King of France of protection to the Vaudois (Protestant subjects of the Duke of Savoy) in the valleys of Piedmont, against the inhuman persecutions of their ruler; who had attempted to convert them by violent means to the Roman Catholic religion, and, failing in his object, had proceeded to drive them from their homes and country, "not without slaughters and tortures by the road."* At length it was announced that the Duke of Savoy, *at the request of the King of France*, had granted an amnesty to the Vaudois, and confirmed all their ancient privileges. This merciless persecution and the redress obtained for it by England, are rendered memorable by Milton's sonnet, and the letters he wrote in conducting the negotiation as Latin secretary to Cromwell; and, still further, by the public collection of money for the Protestants of Piedmont;† part of which, we believe, was formed into a permanent fund, which still remains in some degree available for its original objects, and a monument, "beyond the power of marble," in honour of those who raised it, even

* Carlyle's *Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 358.

† Ibid. p. 364.

though some of them may be without other monument, and their dust may have been scattered by sacrilegious hands to the four winds of heaven.

Blake, in pursuance of the instructions of Cromwell, to "use his best endeavours to intercept at sea, and fight with and take, or otherwise fire and sink" the King of Spain's fleet, as also any other of his ships bound for the West Indies with provisions of war,* and of the secret instructions, "touching the silver fleet of Spain coming from America,"† cruised for a long time about the Straits of Gibraltar. When he had been, at last, obliged, in September, 1656, for want of water, to make sail towards Portugal, Captain Stayner, whom he had left on the coast with a squadron of seven ships, fell in with the plate fleet. The Spanish admiral ran his ship ashore; two others followed his example; and two were set on fire. The English took two ships, valued at near two millions of pieces of eight. Thirty-eight waggon-loads of silver were conveyed from Portsmouth to the Tower of London.‡

About six months after this, when Blake lay at the mouth of the harbour of Cadiz, he received intelligence that the Spanish plate fleet lay at anchor in the bay of Santa Cruz, in the isle of Teneriffe. On

* Cromwell's Letter to Blake, 13th June, 1655; Thurloe, vol. iii. p. 547.

† Blake's Letter to Cromwell, George, 12th June, 1655; Thurloe, vol. iii. p. 541.

‡ Thurloe, vol. v. pp. 399, 433; Whitlocke, p. 643.

the 13th of April, 1657, he departed from Cadiz, and on the 20th arrived at Santa Cruz Bay, in which he found the Spanish fleet of sixteen ships disposed in a very formidable position. Blake had twenty-five ships; but the bay of Santa Cruz, shaped like a horseshoe, was defended at the entrance by a strong castle, well provided with cannon, and in the inner circuit with seven forts, all united by a line of communication, manned with musqueteers. The Spanish admiral drew up all his smaller ships close to the shore, and stationed six great galleons with their broadsides to the sea.

This formidable aspect of things, which those who did not know Blake might have thought would at least make him pause before beginning his attack, whatever sense of the danger of the enterprise it may have produced, caused no irresolution. And the wind,* blowing full into the bay, in a moment brought him among the thickest of his enemies. Here, having, with his twenty-five sail, fought for four hours with seven forts, a castle, and sixteen ships, of six of which the least was bigger than the biggest of his own ships, he silenced the castle and forts, and destroyed the whole of the Spanish fleet. The Spaniards abandoned their ships, which were

* "In all his expeditions," says the quaint but forcible and graphic writer of the *Perfect Politician*, "the wind seldom deceived him, but most an end stood his friend, especially in his last undertaking at the Canary Islands."

sunk or burned, with all their treasure; the English ships being too much shattered in the fight to bring them away. And then the wind, suddenly shifting, carried them out of the bay.*

“The whole action,” says Clarendon, “was so incredible, that all men who knew the place wondered that any sober man, with what courage soever endowed, would ever have undertaken it; and they could hardly persuade themselves to believe what they had done; while the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils and not men who had destroyed them in such a manner.† So much a strong resolution of bold and courageous men can bring to pass, that no resistance or advantage of ground can disappoint them; and it can hardly be imagined how small a loss the English sustained in this unparalleled action, not one ship being left behind, and the killed and wounded not exceeding two hundred men; when the slaughter

* Dr. Johnson, in reference to the remark of Rapin, that “the Spaniards sustained a great loss of ships, money, men, and merchandize, while the English gained nothing but glory,” says, “As if he that increases the military reputation of a people did not increase their power, and he that weakens his enemy in effect strengthens himself”—*Life of Blake*, Johnson’s Works, vol. xii. p. 59. London, 1810.

† If Vice-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars, whose evidence will be found in a subsequent page, is to be relied on, the English character must have altered greatly since 1657. This French Vice-Admiral says, “The English have not the warrior spirit, and if we have war with them, we should have but one thing to do, that is, a landing.”

on board the Spanish ships and on shore was incredible."

Blake cruised for some time afterwards with his victorious fleet at the mouth of the harbour of Cadiz to intercept the Spanish shipping. But finding his constitution broken by the toils and hardships of the last three years, he wished to return and behold once more his native country, for which he had fought so well. He accordingly sailed for England, and in this his last sickness he often, it is said, inquired for land, which, however, he never lived to see. "His dreams were of Old England's welcome shore." Perhaps he dreamt, too, "of toils rewarded and of dangers o'er." And his toils were, indeed, nearly over. How they were rewarded by the nation he had served so well we shall see also. His constitution was now completely worn out by long and arduous service and by the sea-scurvy; and he "who would never strike to any other enemy, struck his topmast to Death." He expired as he was entering Plymouth Sound, 17th August, 1657, in his fifty-ninth year.*

* Wood's *Fasti*, i. 371; *Biog. Brit.*, *in voce*. Hume, with strange inaccuracy, states the time of his death to have been the 20th of April, 1657, the day on which he destroyed the Spanish fleet at Santa Cruz; though there is a letter to him from Cromwell of the 10th of June, with a jewel of 500*l.* value, voted him by the Parliament for his victory at Santa Cruz on the 20th of April. Hume also seems to be inaccurate in saying that had the wind not changed and carried him out of the bay, his fleet must have been destroyed by the fire of the castle and forts, after he had destroyed the Spanish fleet; whereas, the better account is, that he had completely silenced the fire of the castle and forts.

I have a singular pleasure in quoting the testimony of the ablest writers of the opposite party on the character and services of Blake. "This," says Hume, "was the last and greatest action of the gallant Blake. He was consumed with a dropsy and scurvy, and hastened home that he might yield up his breath in his native country, which he had so much adorned by his valour. As he came within sight of land, he expired. Never man, so zealous for a faction, was so much respected and esteemed, even by the opposite factions. He was by principle an inflexible republican; and the late usurpations, amidst all the trust and caresses which he received from the ruling powers, were thought to be very little grateful to him. 'It is still our duty,' he said to the seamen, 'to fight for our country, into what hands soever the government may fall.' Disinterested, generous, liberal, ambitious only of true glory, dreadful only to his avowed enemies, he seems one of the most perfect characters of the age [ay, and of any age], and the least stained with those errors and violences which were then so predominant. The Protector ordered him a pompous funeral at the public charge; but the tears of his countrymen were the most honourable panegyric on his memory."*

I have now before me the *Life of Blake* written by Dr. Johnson, who will not be suspected of any poli-

* *Hist. of England*, chap. 61.

tical predilections in his favour, and it is wonderful to see in what terms the staunch Tory and High Churchman speaks of the staunch Republican and Independent. The reader may judge of the extent of the doctor's praise by the terms in which he censures Blake for acting on one occasion with temerity. "We must thus admit," he says, "amidst our eulogies and applauses, that the great, the wise, and the valiant Blake was once betrayed to an inconsiderate and desperate enterprise, by the resistless ardour of his own spirit, and a noble jealousy of the honour of his country."

Though the country he so gloriously served, and to which his noble character, no less than his genius and valour, did so much honour, refused and refuses him even a tomb, his great and heroic deeds have been commemorated, even by his enemies, on some of the brightest pages of that country's annals. "Nor has any writer," to use the words of Dr. Johnson, "dared to deny him the praise of intrepidity, honesty, contempt of wealth, and love of his country." "He was the first man," says Clarendon, "that declined the old track, and made it apparent that the sciences might be attained in less time than was imagined. He was the first man that brought ships to contemn castles on shore, which had ever been thought very formidable, but were discovered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could rarely be hurt by them. He was the first that

infused that proportion of courage into seamen, by making them see by experience what mighty things they could do if they were resolved, and taught them to fight in fire, as well as upon the water ; and, though he has been very well imitated and followed, was the first that gave the example of that kind of naval courage, and bold and resolute achievements."

"He was jealous," says a contemporary writer, the author of *Lives, English and Foreign*, "of the liberty of the subject and the glory of his nation ; and as he made use of no mean artifices to raise himself to the highest command at sea, so he needed no interest but his merit to support him in it. He scorned nothing more than money, which, as fast as it came in, was laid out by him in the service of the State, and to show that he was animated by that brave public spirit which has since been reckoned rather romantic than heroic. And he was so disinterested, that though no man had more opportunities to enrich himself than he, who had taken so many millions from the enemies of England, yet he threw it all into the public treasury, and did not die 500*l.* richer than his father left him ; which the author avers from his personal knowledge of his family and their circumstances, having been bred up in it, and often heard his brother give this account of him. He was religious according to the pretended purity of those times, but would frequently allow himself to be merry with his officers ; and his tender-

ness and generosity to the seamen had so endeared him to them, that when he died they lamented his loss as that of a common father."

Such was Blake, and such was the navy which he led to victory, and which first gave to England her naval supremacy. With the restoration of Charles II., a strange change came over the scene—a change which reduced England from power and glory to weakness and ignominy. Most readers are acquainted with the state of our navy then, as set forth in the Diary of the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Pepys. But, unfortunately, the change referred to was not a temporary and passing one, though it might be supposed that the "parliamentary talent," which was thenceforth to raise men in England to political power, would ensure, among other blessings, an able administration of the navy. "From the time of Charles the Second down to our own days," says Lord Macaulay, in his article on Sir William Temple, "parliamentary talent has stood in the place of all other acquirements. It has covered ignorance, weakness, rashness, the most fatal maladministration. This is the talent which has made judges without law, and diplomatists without French; which has sent to the Admiralty men who did not know the stern of a ship from her bowsprit, and to the India Board men who did not know the difference between a rupee and a pagoda; which made a foreign secretary of Mr. Pitt, who, as George the Second said, had never opened Vattel; and which

was very near making a Chancellor of the Exchequer of Mr. Sheridan, who could not work a sum in long division."

The effect of the removal of the dead weight of corruption, jobbing, and nepotism on the resources and energies of a great and brave nation was never more signally exemplified than in the rapid rise of England to maritime supremacy. "Such," says Algernon Sidney, "was the power of wisdom and integrity in those that sat at the helm, and their diligence in chusing men only for their merit was blessed with such success that, in two years, our fleets grew to be as famous as our land armies; the reputation and power of our nation rose to a greater height than when we possessed the better half of France and the Kings of France and Scotland were our prisoners. All the states, kings, and potentates of Europe most respectfully, not to say, submissively sought our friendship; and Rome was more afraid of Blake and his fleet, than they had been of the great King of Sweden when he was ready to invade Italy with a hundred thousand men."* These, it may be said, are the words of a friend. Let us hear the words of enemies. "To say the truth," says Roger Coke, "they were a race of men most indefatigable and industrious in business, always seeking for men fit for it, and never preferring any for favour, nor by im-

* Algernon Sidney's *Discourse concerning Government*, chap. ii. sect. 28.

portunity. You scarce ever heard of any revolting from them, except by the Levellers in 1649; no murmur or complaint of seamen or soldiers for want of pay. Nor do I find that they ever pressed either soldiers or seamen in all their wars."* Even David Hume ascribes their success to their preferring men by merit, by courage, skill, and services, and not by favour. And Clarendon describes their army, including in that word their navy, as "an army to which victory was entailed, and which, humanly speaking, could hardly fail of conquest whithersoever it should be led; an army, whose order and discipline, whose sobriety and manners, whose courage and success, have made it famous and terrible over the world."

Some nations die of one disease, some of another. We have seen in the fifth chapter of this work of what disease Turkey is dying. That disease is not parliamentary talent. But in the third chapter, we have seen that "parliamentary talent" was the disease of which Athens died. And if we compare the condition in which Blake left England at his death, at the head of all the nations of the earth in strength and glory, and without a farthing of national debt, with the condition in which we find her at this moment, we shall have some measure of what "parliamentary talent" has done for England.

It is evident that parliamentary talent has proved

* *Detection of the Court and State of England*, vol. ii. p. 30.

a most expensive luxury to the English nation. And if it is a luxury or an amusement which the people of England cannot do without, it is time that they should consider whether it might not find some other channel for its employment than that in which it has worked so much mischief. But to set the owners of "parliamentary talent" to contend against great generals, great admirals, and great statesmen, is a farce of the most monstrous and objectionable description. What Napoleon said of political economy may with truth be said of parliamentary talent:—"If an empire were made of granite, parliamentary talent would reduce it to dust."

It will not do to point to the achievements of Wellington and Nelson, and say, "Look at these, and see how absurd and unjust are the charges against parliamentary talent;" "how silly," would have been Pepys' phrase, for, as the "Naval Peer" observes, "everybody is silly who is not official."

In the preceding chapter I have stated that the successes of Wellington were not due to his government, but to himself. Since that chapter was written I have read carefully a work very recently published, *Our Naval Position and Policy*, by a Naval Peer; and it is a great satisfaction to me to find that the conclusions I had come to are fully borne out by the highest professional authorities. The author of this valuable work, who writes both with ability and modesty, says that

his "general plan is to give expression to opinions upon the present state and organization of our naval power, which he has ascertained to be shared by some of our best officers, and which he would rather have seen emanating from their pens than his own. He would willingly be considered as a 'mere myth,' giving to the public the sentiments of most thinking minds."* This writer says: "Our naval heroes triumphed, like Wellington in later days, in spite of inefficient departments at home, not through their merits. This is not so generally known, perhaps; because, when victories are gained, people do not trouble themselves about a rigid scrutiny into causes and a strict apportionment of the merit. Our fleets conquered and the Admiralty illuminated; success gilds all things; and those were the days of 'strong majorities' too."† And he thus sums up the long account of British heroism set to contend at once against official folly and armed enemies:—"Indeed, our whole naval history seems a wondrous tale of shortcomings at head-quarters, made up for by extraordinary heroism and ability in our officers and seamen."‡

"It is an old remark," says this writer, "that events move in cycles; and we have again a glimpse of the days when, as of yore, soldiers will fight at sea

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, by a Naval Peer, p. 35. London: Longman and Co., 1859.

† Ibid. p. 171.

Ibid. p. 181.

as on land, and the sailors' part of those days will be taken by the stokers of the present."*

Hence will be apparent a reason for having narrated in this chapter, in some detail, the achievements of Blake; for those achievements were in great part performed, not by seamen, but by soldiers, draughted from some of the best regiments of the Parliament. The regularly bred seamen navigated the ships, the Parliamentary Ironsides worked the guns and did the fighting and boarding: even as now the engineers and stokers will navigate the ships, and the naval artillerymen will work the guns, and other soldiers will do other parts of the fighting business.

In a former chapter I have dwelt on the importance of men acting together in war having a confidence in each other—a confidence particularly exemplified in some of Cromwell's regiments. This most important subject is well treated and illustrated in the work referred to, as considered in its bearings upon naval war.

"It is *discipline*, not seamanship, that will decide future battles by sea as well as land, and this is a matter well worth considering. Nearly all Englishmen are individually brave and pugnacious, but a *body* of Englishmen, or men of any other country, will be brave according to the degree of their mutual confidence. It is the essence of discipline to give this confidence, by so organizing a

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, p. 48.

body that they become, as it were, one man, and no individual can leave his post without betraying himself to his own companions in arms, as well as to his superiors.

“In a well-organized body, so strong are the bands of discipline, that inevitable death cannot break them, as some very beautiful instances have shown.

“But split that well-organized body into disjointed fragments and discipline is lost, as has often happened in a routed force, as happened at the storming of the Redan, where different regiments got mixed together and became a mere mob.”*

The author, in a note on the sentence that in a well-organized body so strong are the bands of discipline that inevitable death cannot break them, refers to the well-known and often-quoted case of the *Birkenhead*. But, as in contrasting the almost unparalleled discipline observed in that case with the loss of discipline at the storming of the Redan, his appearing to attribute the loss of discipline in the latter case to the circumstance of different regiments getting mixed might lead to the inference that the case of the *Birkenhead* was a case of a single regiment, it may be proper to mention that the troops on board the *Birkenhead* consisted of draughts from no less than *ten* different regiments, and that the admirable discipline maintained on that sad and memorable occasion — a discipline which death,

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, pp. 56, 57.

coming in an unusual and horrible form, could not destroy—was due to the authority and example of the commanding officer on board the *Birkenhead*, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Seton, of the 74th Highlanders, who perished. Undoubtedly the other officers commanding the various detachments did their duty admirably also. But the fact that the orders of the senior, and therefore commanding officer on board, were obeyed with the same alacrity by all the men of the various other regiments as by the men of his own regiment, the 74th, proves that, with firmness and intelligence in the officer commanding, several bodies of men taken from different regiments may possess all the qualities of a single well-organized body. What renders the case of the *Birkenhead* still more striking is the fact that the troops on board the *Birkenhead* were mostly composed of young soldiers and raw recruits. Yet such was the force of discipline on that occasion, that the utmost order was preserved to the last. To borrow the words of some of the survivors, “calm and self-possessed, Colonel Seton gave all his orders as if on parade. He superintended himself the embarkation of the women and children into the boats, standing at the gangway and directing as they were passed down. Then, side by side, he and the captain of the ship stood at the helm, providing for the safety of all that could be saved. They never attempted to save themselves.” Four

hundred and forty men, including nine military and eight naval officers, two surgeons, three hundred and sixty-one soldiers, and sixty seamen, perished; but *not one woman or child*.

In the passage above quoted, the Naval Peer has expressed his own, an Englishman's, opinion of the general courage and pugnacity of Englishmen. It might be expected that a Frenchman's opinion of Englishmen would differ somewhat from Englishmen's opinion of themselves; but with so many opportunities of knowing the fighting qualities of Englishmen, even making allowance for his knowledge that the English government has now for 200 years done all in its power to render Englishmen unaccustomed to the use of arms, one would hardly have looked for so strong an opinion as the following in a parliamentary blue-book. It is in the evidence of the French *Enquête Parlementaire*, nominated in November, 1849, and is quoted by the Naval Peer* among other extracts from the evidence of eighty-nine witnesses, flag and other officers, appended to the French report.

EVIDENCE OF VICE-ADMIRAL DUPETIT-THOUARS.

“While speaking of war, I have something to say, which I think important and well founded, and which I am the more convinced of, because the English themselves, good judges of the dangers they are

* At page 326 of his work, *Our Naval Position and Policy*.

exposed to, admit it. The brochure of Prince de Joinville produced a great effect in the maritime world, especially in England, and was the cause of very energetic measures being taken for the defence of her coasts. In my opinion, though England may have erected fortifications, a disembarkation is always possible there, and for it we should not require line-of-battle ships. We should only require seventy corvettes, and some avisos of auxiliary steam power (*mixtes*). *With these means, without the English having power to resist, we could throw 70,000 men on the coast of England, who could never have resisted an invasion. All invasions of England have been crowned with success. She is not prepared for a land war, as we could make it. The English have not the warrior spirit; and if we have war with them, we should have but one thing to do, that is, a landing."*

It is remarkable that a Spanish ambassador in England, in the reign of James I., pronounced an opinion as disparaging to the manhood of Englishmen as the opinion of this French vice-admiral; so low had the character of England fallen at that time, through a government eminent only for sloth, imbecility, and baseness. It was reserved for our days to show that "parliamentary talent" could do as much to dishonour and destroy a great nation as the tyranny of the worst and basest of the Stuarts. Like the old Highlander who was found on the deserted field of battle, watching a dead body (that

of his lord), and being asked the name of the person whose body he waited upon with so much care, replied, "He was a man yesterday:" so the English of that time might have answered, "We were men once." And *they* were to be *men* again. For such was the inherent vigour and capacity of the great people thus misgoverned and insulted, that within twenty years of the time when this insolent Spaniard declared that there were "no men in England," his countrymen were fain to comfort themselves for the terrible overthrows they received from Blake, with the belief that they were devils and not men who had destroyed them in such a manner. But it is not safe to tempt Fortune or Providence too far; and it may now nearly concern the English people to consider whether, as they saved themselves once by sweeping away the government of the Stuarts, the time has now fully come when they should rid themselves for ever of the government of "parliamentary talent."

Whatever we, as Englishmen, may think of the accuracy either of Vice-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars' assertions or opinions, the knowledge of them, as thus placed on record by the republican government of France of 1849-50, may give us the advantage, whatever it be, of seeing ourselves as others—at least as Frenchmen—see us. It is also to be remembered that Vice-Admiral Dupetit-Thouars' evidence was given *before* the *prestige* of England was for the time

destroyed, and the otherwise incredible incapacity of our "parliamentary talent" governments was thoroughly proved by the Russian war of 1854. The English nation is greatly indebted to the "Naval Peer" for the labour he has undergone of reading the French Report and Evidence, filling together two large volumes of 1,422 pages, and publishing some important extracts from those volumes. "To show," he observes, "that the Commission was in *earnest*, it is only necessary to state that they first held 65 sittings in Paris, before proceeding to the ports, and that the total number of sittings was 203, of which 139 are published in the Report; the others, possibly, it was prudent to conceal from rival powers. No points affecting the organization, efficiency, or economy of the French navy seem to have been overlooked; but while the whole Report is valuable to any one wishing to understand the state of naval affairs in France, there are parts peculiarly interesting to Englishmen: the education and due selection of officers, with regard both to natural abilities and professional acquirements; the organization of the whole *personnel* and *matériel* of the French navy; the modification required by the introduction of steam power; the opinions of the best French officers as to the capability of France to contend with England by sea."* The conclusion to be drawn from the whole scope of the Report and

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, pp. 309, 310.

Evidence is, that it is the *fixed purpose* of France to establish such a system and disposal of the French forces as should ensure the power of *striking a decisive blow at the breaking out of hostilities*. And one part of the French *idée fixe* is, like that of the Turks respecting the Christians, that when once they, the French, have effected a landing, they can drive the English before them, or slaughter them, like sheep.

The European naval powers that concern us at present are those of France and Russia. In regard to France, it is sufficient for the present purpose to state that the great activity with regard to naval affairs, indicated by the *Enquête Parlementaire* of 1849, has been more than continued down to the present moment. Those who wish to find the most minute details of the present condition of the French and Russian navies, may consult Mr. Busk's elaborate work, recently published, on the present state and future capabilities of the navies of the world.* In regard to the details of the present condition of the English navy, the most ample information will be found in Mr. Busk's book, and in that of the "Naval Peer," already referred to and cited.

The opinion of professional men, as embodied in the valuable work of the "Naval Peer," appears to be that the question of the naval supremacy will in

* *The Navies of the World; their present State and future Capabilities*. By Hans Busk, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge author of *The Rifle, and how to Use it*, &c. &c. London, Routledge & Co., 1859.

future depend upon other causes than mere seamanship; that among these causes discipline will be foremost, and next, training at the guns—good artillery practice.

“In the first requisite, so far as having thousands of men ready to embark, imbued with the strictest and sternest spirit of military discipline, Russia would, strange to say, take the lead. Theirs is a singular system, and probably only suited to the docile Muscovite . . . a cavalry soldier to-day, a sailor to-morrow.”* I don’t know much about the docility of the Muscovite, but I know that some of Cromwell’s best cavalry soldiers became as good sailors as they had been soldiers, and that, too, when they were citizens of the English Commonwealth, not subjects of the despot Cromwell.

“Next to Russia, France stands first in the power of embarking a large force of *disciplined* seamen, since all her merchant sailors, or nearly so, have passed through the military navy, and have there attained to a considerable degree of discipline. Under their judicious system all these are available.

“England has, of course, a large and highly-disciplined force of seamen scattered over various foreign stations; but as beyond those now serving, and the coast-guard (some 5,000 men), she has few man-of-war’s men, she is not on a par with either France or Russia in respect of available force.”†

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, p. 59. † *Ibid*, pp. 59, 60.

In the third chapter of this work, it has been shown that when "parliamentary talent" had attained its greatest splendour at Athens, words had taken the place of deeds, and the deeds, when they did come, came too late. As, according to Nature's general laws, the same effects may be expected to flow from the same causes, we need not be in the least surprised to find "parliamentary talent" producing in England, at the present time, results similar to those it produced at Athens more than two thousand years ago.

The English government, having by its conduct of the Russian war of 1854 weakened and discredited England in the eyes of all Europe, had, by the time the war was over, got a fleet of some twenty sail of the line ready to celebrate the peace.

"But Russia had then twenty-seven sail of the line in the Baltic, which she exercises every summer. It is true they were sailing vessels; but Russia has now the advantage of our experience in converting sailing ships into screws, and she will very shortly have a noble fleet of screw line-of-battle ships equal to any in the world. France, we know, has already nearly as many as ourselves, and we cannot put these two facts together without seeing their significance."*

In 1844 the honour of England—I mean by honour, merely that place among the nations which ensures that no nation shall insult her with impunity—required that her officer—contumeliously expelled

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, p. 54.

from Tahiti by a French officer, who had no business there—should be carried back to his post in an English ship. The English government of that day had resolved upon this course, but was told by the French ambassador that France would not permit it. The choice, therefore, lay between war and submission. The English government submitted. Let us see the logic of those persons who said the island of Tahiti was too insignificant a subject to fight about. This proceeds upon the assumption that the case is similar to that of prosecuting a thief for stealing your pocket-handkerchief. But there is no insult in the loss of your handkerchief, and you know that a sufficient machinery is at work on the thief who took it to guard you against the loss of your handkerchief being followed by that of all your property. But the case is totally different between nations. “Be sure and put up with no affronts,” was the maxim of Cromwell; and when an English merchant—a Quaker—proved to him that a ship of his had been unjustly confiscated by the French, Cromwell, having first given the Quaker a letter to Cardinal Mazarin, demanding redress within three days, but without effect, then seized and sold the two first French ships within his reach, indemnified the Quaker out of the proceeds, and paid over the surplus to the French ambassador. “If Bonaparte,” said Nelson, placing the poker in a certain position on the hearth, “should insist on that poker lying in that position, I would

insist on its lying in this"—altering its position. Among civilized men, no man has a right to bully another; and among civilized nations who have, or make pretensions to an equal footing, no nation has a right to bully or insult another, even to the shadow of a shade. To submit to such insult is not economy, but folly, for the end will be the loss of all that is worth living for.

In the case of the English blockade of the Piræus in 1850, in consequence of the refusal by the Greek government of redress of certain grievances, or alleged grievances, France urged her "good offices"—that is, her interference, upon England. In the course of the business, France, choosing to consider herself affronted, suddenly recalled her ambassador from England, and made some preparatory demonstrations with the hearty approval of the "Chamber," the announcement of the departure of the French ambassador from London being received with "three rounds of cheers." France had then about 500,000 soldiers, a strong squadron of line-of-battle ships at Cherbourg, a population not then averse to war, and a government which was supposed to desire it as a diversion from domestic affairs.

In both these cases, England had to yield to France, from the obvious reason that, being totally unprepared for war, while France was armed to the teeth, she would, by adopting the alternative of war,

have been suddenly exposed to the greatest danger—perhaps, to a humiliating catastrophe.

The Greek business of 1850, above referred to, taken in conjunction with the recent affair of the *Charles et Georges*, throws, as the “Naval Peer” observes, “a light upon the rules which Napoleon III. lays down for his own policy and for that of other countries.” *

It is not necessary, for arriving to a clear conclusion on this subject, to enter upon the inquiry whether England was in the right, or in the wrong, in the Greek business of 1850, or whether France was in the right, or in the wrong, in the affair of the *Charles et Georges*. The owners of “parliamentary talent” might talk for a year about the facts, or alleged facts, of each of these cases, and the application or non-application of the law of nations to those facts, or alleged facts. But there is a view of the matter which may be stated in a very few words. Is it true, or is it not true, that, as between herself and Portugal, France declared herself the sole judge of what affected her own honour? And is it true, or is it not true, that when the honour of England was concerned in the Greek business, then France insisted on England accepting her interference—in other words, recognizing her as the proper judge? I greatly fear that both these questions must be answered in the affirmative.

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, p. 358.

In the parliamentary discussion there would be, of course, the usual proportion of "very stout words" in the long speeches by which "parliamentary talent" has rendered England so strong and glorious. "It is curious," observes the Naval Peer, "that in all the long speeches made on the subject, no member of either House who urged the duty of sending a squadron to the Tagus, seems to have inquired whether England *could* have sent one strong enough to be of use.

"In each of these three instances a *casus belli* arose, and in each of the three 'diplomacy' solved it by the very simple expedient of yielding to France all she asked. But there is another class of cases—a large one too—where this not very ingenious solution may be inapplicable: cases where the strongest or best prepared party has an interest in war, or in the attainment of some object, to the concession of which war itself would be preferable. For such cases there is no diplomacy but that of the sword—the sharp and *ready* sword: for there can be no such imbecile folly as that of believing that a power really meaning war, would let some time elapse between the resolution and the declaration."*

Any Englishman who attentively reads and considers these things, and then learns that insults offered to the honour of England were met only by long speeches, and what Lord Brougham has happily de-

* *Our Naval Position and Policy*, p. 364.

signated "an effeminate licence of tongue," may remember with a mingled feeling of pride and shame how Cromwell would have met them. With such a present, the future may well indeed be said to be "looming gloomily."* Let us all pray that [the Almighty will deliver us from "parliamentary talent" before it has quite completed its work. In the meantime I will conclude in the words of one of the truest men that ever died for religion and liberty: "I hope that it shall not be said of us, as of the Romans once, *O homines ad servitutem parati!*"

* The title of one of the chapters in *Our Naval Position and Policy*.

THE END.

65, Cornhill, London, August, 1859.

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